



Vlassis Caniaris — WHERE IS NORTH WHERE IS SOUTH — Olaf Nicolai — Solitude

SOUTH

AS A STATE OF MIND

fall/winter 2015

fifth issue



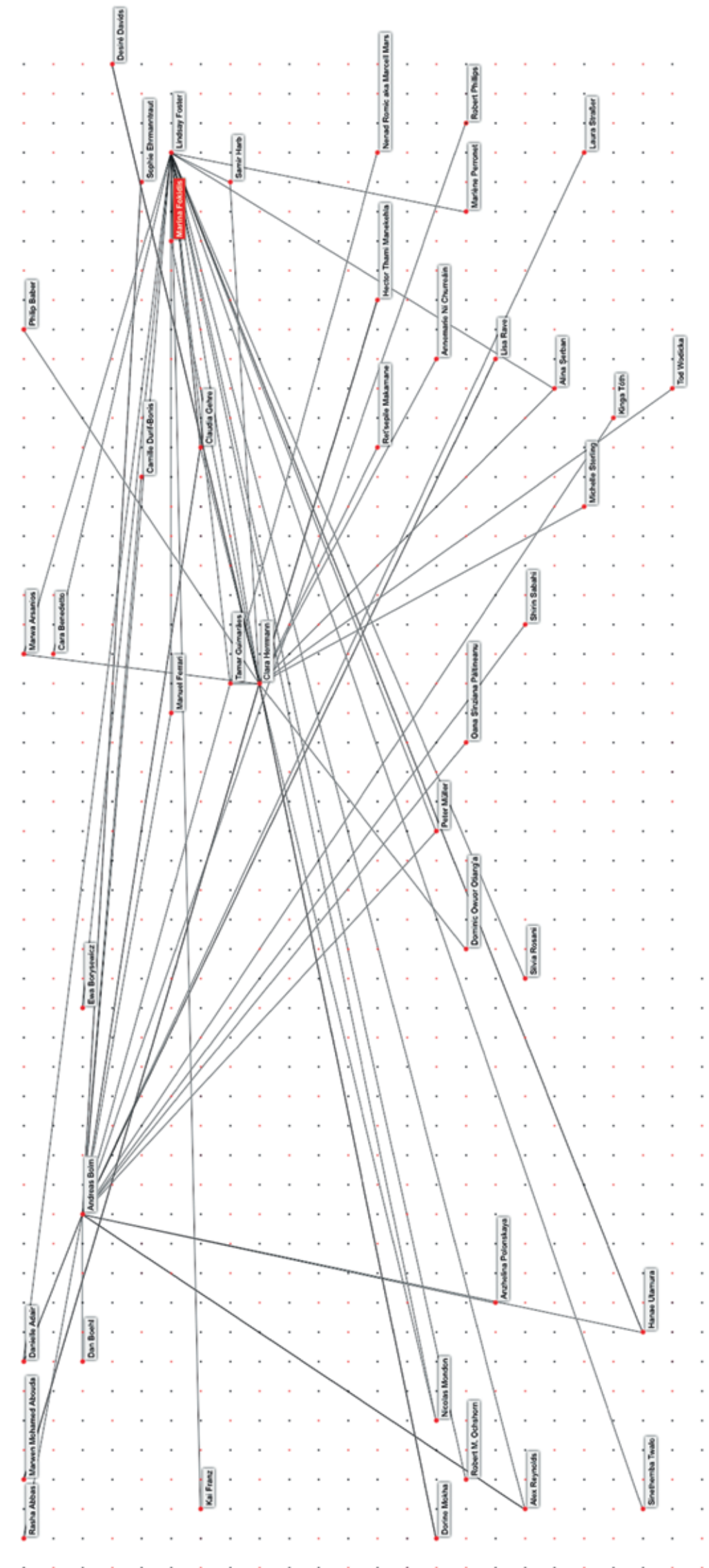
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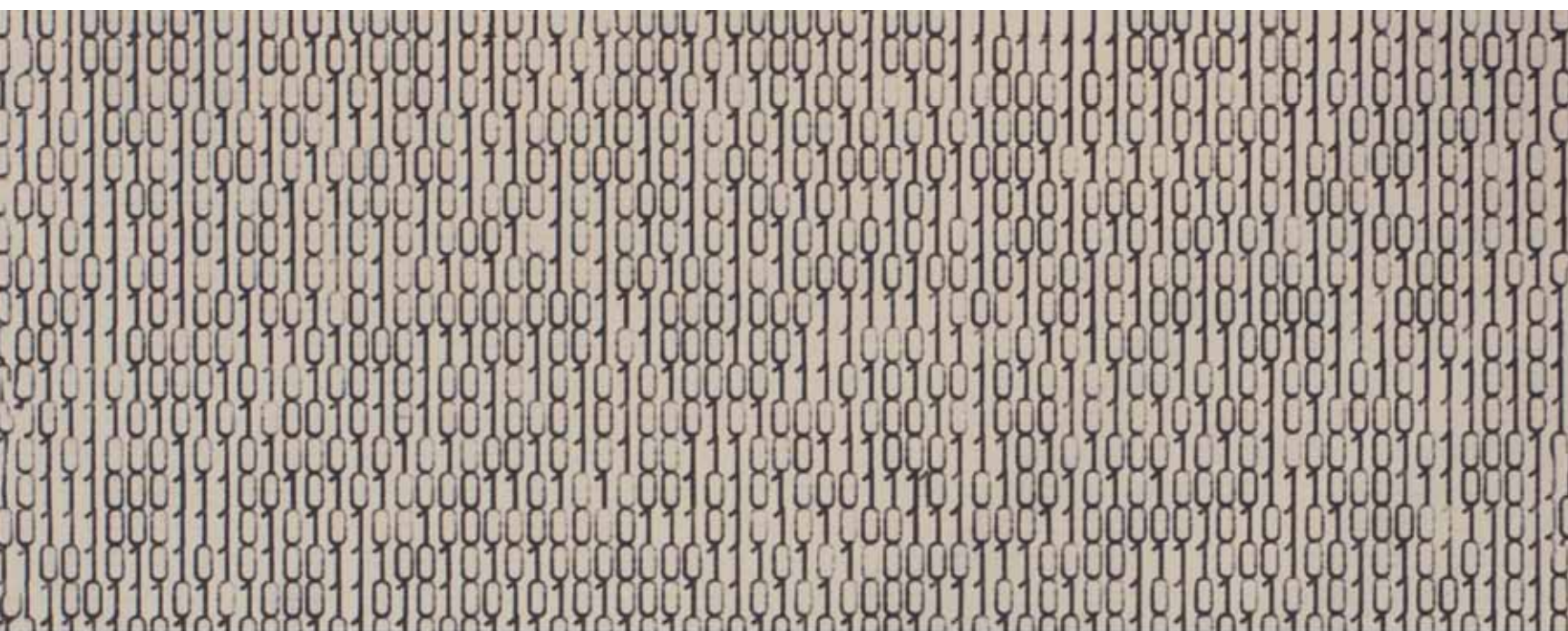
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PO Box 2-71 57019 Ano Peraia, Greece
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Founding and Editorial Director
Marina Fokidis, marinaf@southasastateofmind.com

Creative Director
Yannis Karlopoulos, artdirector@southasastateofmind.com

Editor-in-Chief
Eleanna Papathanasiadi, editorial@southasastateofmind.com

Editorial Team
Michelangelo Corsaro
Klea Charitou
Marina Maniadaki
Angeliki Roussou
Jorgina Stamogianni

Lay-out Designer
Rinétta Koskinidou

Contributors – Issue 5
Jorge Alencar, Pablo León de la Barra, Shumon Basar, Martin Beck, Riccardo Benassi, Erik Blinderman, Brave New Alps, Katarina Burin, Juan Canela, Galit Eilat, Claudia Gehre, Tamar Guimarães, Marieke van Hal, Samir Harb, Clara Herrmann, Jean-Baptiste Joly, Philipp Kleinmichel, Neto Machado, Christoforos Marinos, Emmanuel Mavrommatis, Tom Morton, Estelle Nabeyrat, Olaf Nicolai, Afroditi Panagiotakou, Nikos Papastergiadis, Filipa Ramos, Lisa Rave, Miguel Robles-Durán, Vanessa Safavi, Kate Sutton, Alexander Tovborg, Misal Adnan Yıldız, Lawrence Weiner, Raleigh Werberger, Tod Wodicka

English Editor
Sarah Ream

Translations
Tony Moser (from Greek to English)
Vicki Politis (from Greek to English)
Philip Ramp (from Greek to English)

Advertising
Eleanna Papathanasiadi, advertise@southasastateofmind.com

Online Communication
Michelangelo Corsaro, press@southasastateofmind.com

Distribution
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Sharjah, Sydney, Tel Aviv, Valetta, Venice
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contributors

[1] Misal Adnan Yıldız is the artistic director of Künstlerhaus Stuttgart (2011–2014). From November 2014, he is taking over the director position at Artspace of Auckland. [2] Marina Maniadaki, editorial team. [3] Christoforos Marinós is an art historian and curator based in Athens. [4] Miguel Robles-Durán is director of the Graduate Program in Urban Ecologies at The New School/Parsons in New York. [5] Claudia Gehre is a freelance cultural manager and curator based in Leipzig. [6] Clara Herrmann is a Berlin-based freelance editor and cultural manager. [7] Eleanna Papathanasiadi, editor-in-chief. [8] Emmanuel Mavrommatis is emeritus professor of art history, School of Visual and Applied Arts, AUTH (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki). [9] Angeliki Roussou, editorial team. [10] Vanessa Safavi is an artist who lives and works in Basel and Berlin. [11] Estelle Nabeyrat is a curator and art critic based in Paris. [12] Klea Charitou, editorial team. [13] Afroditi Panagiotakou is the executive vice director and communication and marketing director at the Onassis Cultural Center. She is based in Athens. [14], [44] Neto Machado and Jorge Alencar are a couple of Brazilian artists that dives into cinema, choreography, TV, curatorship, theory and education. [15] Nikos Papastergiadis is a professor at the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne. [16] Galit Eilat is a writer and freelance curator, member of the curatorial team for the 31st São Paulo Biennial and the World Biennial Forum 2. [17] Katarina Burin is an artist based in Cambridge, MA and Berlin and teaches Visual Art at Harvard University. [18] Samir Harb is an independent architect and cartoonist living in Stuttgart. [19] Marina Fokidis, founding and editorial director. [20] Lawrence Weiner is an artist. He divides his time between his studio in New York City and his boat in Amsterdam. [21] Riccardo Benassi is an artist based in Berlin. [22] Marieke van Hal is an art historian and founding director of the Biennial Foundation. She lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

contributors

[23] Raleigh Werberger is an educator in the United States. [24] Tod Wodicka is a scoundrel. His second novel *The Household Spirit* is published in June. [25] Filipa Ramos is a curator and a critic based in Milan and London. [26 - 27] Lisa Rave is an artist based in Berlin. Erik Blinderman is based in New York. Together they founded Whole Wall Films. [28] Shumon Basar is a writer, currently working on a book entitled *The Age of Earthquakes: A Guide to the Extreme Present*, with Douglas Coupland and Hans Ulrich Obrist, to be published by Penguin in Spring 2015. [29] Olaf Nicolai is an artist based in Berlin. [30] Rinetta Koskinidou, lay-out designer. [31] Tom Morton is a writer, independent curator, and a contributing editor of *frieze*, based in Rochester, UK. [32] Pablo León de la Barra is an exhibition maker, independent curator, researcher, editor and blogger, and holds a PhD in History and Theories from the Architectural Association, London. [33] Alexander Tovborg is an artist based in Copenhagen. [34] Jean-Baptiste Joly is founding director and artistic director of Akademie Schloss Solitude, and honorary professor at the School of Art Weißensee, College of Design, Berlin. [35] Philipp Kleinmichel is a philosopher and cultural theorist based in Berlin. [36] Brave New Alps are an Italian design collective. In their work, they set up spaces for contention, in which accepted structures of power and discourse are challenged. [37] Martin Beck is a philosopher and writer based in Berlin. [38] Yannis Karlopoulos, creative director. [39] Sophie Goltz is the artistic director of *Stadtkuratorin Hamburg*, curating public art for the City of Hamburg. [40] Kate Sutton is a writer based in Zagreb. [41] Jorgina Stamogianni, editorial team. [42] Michelangelo Corsaro, editorial team, web editor-in-chief. [43] Tamar Guimarães is an artist based in Copenhagen. [45] Juan Canela is an independent curator and writer. He lives and works in Barcelona.



editor's note

HERE, NOW

The last years here in Athens (and in the rest of the world, I assume) have been very disorienting. Forced mobility between countries in the search for a stable income, politically diverse proposals – none of them at all reassuring – for a slightly more stable future opening up new dilemmas; unforeseen compromises and darkness, even under the strong sun, seem the norm. Each time I write an editorial, I promise that the next will start on a happier note. Yet this is not so easy when, for example, coming back ‘home’ after the summer break you realise that for every hundred people swimming in the morning (at the shore you can normally wash away your worries, at least) there is a similar number struggling or even drowning by night in an effort to reach Europe. And there are no easy solutions: all possible outcomes entail a degree of discomfort or a price to be paid. We are learning to launch ourselves into dark waters, as this is the only way to finally reach land. And with this effort, there will also be some dynamic transformations and unexpected shortcuts that can only meet with positive outcomes. Hopefully.

Soft and slippery grounds seem to create a need for territorial quests. In the case of this magazine, the quest is for imaginary territories. *South (as a State of Mind)* has been a ‘tag’ to help us move on. And we do. We never thought of the notion of ‘South’ in pure geographical terms. Everywhere is southern compared to somewhere else. So what does ‘South’ mean in the end? For us, it is just a parable, full of ‘amusing’ stereotypes upon which we built a romantic manifesto, not realistic in any possible sense. Or maybe it is slightly realistic? We chose a word to describe a limited printed context, a word to be interpreted by many contributors in diverse ways. And indeed it was, and still is.

So, *Where is North, Where is South?*

This issue borrows its title from a piece by the Greek artist Vlassis Caniaris, who worked largely in relation to issues such as migration and labour, mainly in the sixties and seventies. In the following pages, an extensive feature presents his works and texts about him that shape the profile of both an oppositionist and a gentleman.

Meanwhile, this issue was conceived and put together – for the most part – in the so-called ‘North’, and in particular at Akademie Schloss Solitude. As such, voices of residents at the Akademie make up a large part of it.

We are also very happy and honoured to have Lawrence Weiner designing the poster for this issue as a collaborative project with *Stadtkuratorin Hamburg*.

And then, during the course of this issue’s production, some big news arrived in the form of a large spaceship that landed, to our surprise, so calmly and naturally in our backyard. From the next issue on, for the following two years, *South (as a State of Mind)* will become the magazine of documenta 14, edited by Quinn Latimer and Adam Szymczyk (the Editor-in-Chief of Publications and Artistic Director of documenta 14, respectively). Together with us, they will establish a larger international editorial board, as well as a short of redesign by Mevis & Van Deursen, office in Amsterdam. The magazine will continue to speak from the South and address the South, as, in their words, “a rich and changing field of associations, captured from diverse cultural perspectives and through many new voices”.

We are transforming. (Yeah.)

We welcome the change, and take the opportunity to thank our advertisers, our contributors, our readers and our friends for all their love and their ceaseless support that brought us here. Now.

Marina Fokidis



Akademie Schloss Solitude. Photo by Marina Fokidis

GOOD PHOTOSHOP SKILLS REQUIRED

by Shumon Basar

In Beckett’s famous play, *Waiting for Godot*, Vladimir and Estragon debate the existence of God(ot), threaten to leave, but remain fixed where we found them. Two friends, united by history, disunited by personal beliefs, wondering where exactly they should spend their last days on Earth. And in whose name. Below are two other friends, in a different landscape, disunited by what comes next

Photo by Natasha Stallard

“I’m going to join the Islamic State.”
“You mean ISIS?”
“No. Islamic State.”
“You mean ISIL?”
“No. Are you deaf? Islamic State. The Caliphate. It’s new.”
“Define ‘new’.”
“Since June.”
“Technically, not ‘new’.”

The first man grimaces.

“Did they ask you to go?”
“I watched a video.”
“The video asked you to go?”
“They need people with ‘Good Photoshop skills’.”
“You’re serious?”
“I’ve never been more serious my whole life.”
“I’ve known you your whole life.”

The second man stays calm.

“A higher cause. Subhan Allah.”
“What if I said you’re misguided? Would you...”
“...behead you?”

The first man is without noticeable expression.

“I did not watch the videos.”
“I did.”
“I don’t need to see the videos.”
“I did.”

The second man has downcast eyes. Hope.
Where is hope?

“I have known you your whole life,” says the second man, “and loved you like a brother; and I am telling you, with the love of a brother, that you are misguided in every possible way. There isn’t scripture to defend you.”

The first man has not finished packing his suitcase. What will he need to take?

“Nation states are blasphemy.”
“Blasphemy is blasphemy.”
“Don’t beat me with your Westernised words.”
“Don’t use my Wi-Fi to download Jihadist propaganda.”

The second man unplugs his router.

“You can come with me.”
“My Photoshop skills are non-existent.”
“Final Cut Pro?”
“Never heard of it.”
“HashtagendofSykesPicot.”
“Really?”
“Yes. Really.”

The first man had never heard of a hashtag until hashtagendofSykesPicot.

“It’s not too late.”
“For?”
“A change of heart.”
“Do not question my heart. My faith. My purpose.”
“Faith without questioning is not faith but a simple programme.”
“Sophist.”
“Will you force me at gunpoint to pay a tax for being a Sophist?”
“You’re not funny.”
“Exactly. Funny or die?”
“Die.”

The second man wants to laugh. He would love to be able to laugh it off. He can’t.

“So you’re coming?”
“Where?”
“The IS?”
“Iz?”
“I told you. I-dot-S-dot.”
“You’re going now?”
“Now.”

They do not move.

The earth turns.



This picture refers to the other ways in which the word ISIS seems to exist around the world.

WHERE

WHERE

IS

IS

NORTH?

SOUTH?

Vlassis Caniaris, *What's North, What's South? (Children and Testimony)*, 1988, mixed media installation, dimensions variable, Courtesy of the Estate of the artist and Kalfayan Galleries, Athens/Thessaloniki

**“YOU BEGIN TO SEE HOW MUCH
THIS MUSIC IMPROVES ME? – IL FAUT
MÉDITERRANISER LA MUSIQUE”**
THE NORTH, THE SOUTH, NIETZSCHE, WAGNER AND BIZET
by Martin Beck

Approaching Nietzsche's geo-philosophy through his criticism of Wagner's
northern music and his praise for Bizet as a musician of the South



Design from the United States premiere of Wagner's *Parsifal*
at the Metropolitan Opera House, 24 December 1903

A KEY IDEA OF HEGELIANISM is that time is more intelligent than space, because it is the medium of the spirit and of the movement of the concept. This thought, and the obsession with history that the nineteenth century derived from it, is the backdrop for Nietzsche's opposing idea of the 'untimely' or 'anachronistic' and of geo-philosophy and geo-aesthetics: a theory of spaces, topographies and climates, bodies and their conditions of life, health and degeneration.

Hegel's philosophy of history assumes that the spirit makes itself concrete and true through history, leading to an ever-increasing rationality of our forms of life. Art and philosophy are "their time contained in thought", our means of knowing, expressing and bringing forth this rationality as it develops. For Hegel, this can be found in the way that Hesiod and Homer invent the worldview of the ancient Greeks through their aesthetic creations, in the way classical tragedy shows the contradictions that this worldview produces in a more complex social reality, in the way that Stoic philosophy prepares the solution of these contradictions through the Christian worldview.

Successful agency and, thus, successful art and philosophy are a matter of timing and rationality: thinking a thought whose time has come, bringing to the fore and solving the contradictions of the 'idea' that governs the historical process.

Nietzsche's geo-philosophy replaces this teleology with a topography: England, Germany, France, Spain, Italy; the North, the South, the Mediterranean, Africa, the sub-tropes, the tropes. And it changes our idea of agency: for Nietzsche the productive forces of art and philosophy cannot come from history alone. Rather they require an untimely or unhistorical element, something that is "like an atmosphere within which alone life can germinate and with the destruction of which it must vanish". "What deed would man be capable of," asks Nietzsche in *Untimely Meditations*, "if he had not first entered into that vaporous region of the unhistorical?" Geo-philosophy embraces this unhistorical, anachronistic element, not only acknowledging the differences between topographies, atmospheres, climates, but also considering them to be irreducible influences and constraints. The climates and topographies we come from, live in and travel to are constantly influencing our bodily and mental life, so the art and philosophy we produce breathe a certain air. And, like these climates themselves, our thoughts and works of art act as bodily and mental stimuli, as poisons or as remedies.

Nietzsche's own geo-aesthetical drama revolves around music and quite a personal story of affection and bitter disappointment: his early enthusiastic friendship with Wagner, which evolved into

a deep intellectual enemy, and the late entry of a surprising third: Bizet. Wagner and Nietzsche met for the last time in their lives in the autumn of 1876, in Sorrento. According to a story that is not entirely verifiable, a final long walk brought them to an elevation overlooking the gulf of Naples, where Wagner took the opportunity to tell Nietzsche about his new project, *Parsifal*. Nietzsche allegedly hid his bewilderment by showing no reaction at all. What he might already have been thinking then, we see in his writings of the late 1880s.²

Wagner's worldview had already altered dramatically once: over the course of his twenty-six years working on the *Ring Cycle*, he had changed his initial plan of Brunhilde, at her last appearance, singing about free love and socialism to singing, as Nietzsche puts it, the fourth book of Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Representation*. Here, Wagner had left the revolutionary anarchist utopia of his early days behind, envisioning a new redemption through the negation of the will to live. But, for Nietzsche, *Parsifal* was even worse: redemption was to come now through some kind of pure, elevated Christian love. Wagner the atheist had buckled under Rome's cross; or worse, Wagner the actor was faking it. Nietzsche had once invested his highest hopes in his friend's music, which had now become the epitome of decadence, "a first-rate nerve-destroyer", "an intoxication and stupefying narcotic". The void Wagner left in Nietzsche's musical life was quite unsuspectingly filled on 27 November 1881 at the Politeama theatre in Genoa. Nietzsche reported in a postcard to his friend Heinrich Köselitz, "Again made the acquaintance of something good, an opera by François [*sic*] Bizet (who is that?): *Carmén* [*sic*]... Today somewhat sick, because of bad weather, not because of the music: maybe I would have been even sicker if I had not heard it. Good things are a medicine for me!"³

What – besides his decadence and bad character – makes Wagner's music so awful that it is – to someone as weather-sensitive as the always-ailing Nietzsche – as sickening as bad weather? It is its origin in "the *damp* north": Wagner and the Germans are, according to Nietzsche, "on *quite intimate terms* with bad weather, with German weather! Wotan is their God, but Wotan is the God of bad weather". This affinity to bad weather links body and mind: "And just as everything loves its own metaphorical likeness, so the German loves the clouds and everything associated with a lack of clarity, with becoming, with twilight, with dampness: any kind of uncertainty, shapelessness, shifting around, or developing he senses as something 'profound'." This love of a "lack of clarity" purportedly made them not only prone to alcoholism, but also to any kind of spiritual make-believe: only in Germany could the idealism of

Schelling and Hegel be taken seriously. It was the riddles of the German soul, astonishing to foreigners, that “Hegel systematized and Richard Wagner [...] set to music”.⁴

So what makes Bizet better, in every way “the opposite of Wagner”, and the new hope for a Dionysian music? Being better than Wagner would not mean being more rational or more up-to-date, as Nietzsche concedes that “through Wagner modernity speaks her most intimate language”. To “dream of the future of music” instead means to “dream of it being freed from the influence of the North”, having in your ears “the prelude to a deeper, mightier, and perhaps more perverse and mysterious music, a super-German music, which does not fade, pale, and die away, as all German music does, at the sight of the blue, wanton sea and the Mediterranean clearness of sky – a super-European music, which holds its own even in presence of the brown sunsets of the desert, whose soul is akin to the palm-tree, and can be at home and can roam with big, beautiful, lonely beasts of prey”. It would be a music “of which the rarest charm would be that it knew nothing more of good and evil”. This is – maybe at least in part – Bizet’s achievement: “Here in every respect the climate is altered,” observes Nietzsche. Bizet was the one “to see a new beauty and seduction”, someone “who discovered a piece of *the south of music*”.

This difference lies on the one hand in the plots of the operas, which are – besides their obvious differences – basically both love stories. Wagner’s *Parsifal* tackles his signature topic of redemption: Parsifal is able to redeem Amfortas, Kundry and the whole brotherhood of the grail by being immune to sexual desire. Quoting Goethe, Nietzsche described the whole setup as “suffocating of the rumination of moral and religious absurdities”. It is barely distinguishable from a parody: how exactly is Parsifal supposed to go on to father Lohengrin? Wagner is clearly no dramatist in the

proper sense. He is not about dramatic consequence and necessity but rather aims to evoke this specific half-conscious “hunch of depth” that for Nietzsche is so characteristic of German idealism and romanticism. *Carmen*, on the other hand, based on a story by Merimée, gets rid of this “fog of the Wagnerian ideal”: it is about “love as fate, as a fatality, cynical, innocent, cruel,—and precisely in this way *Nature!* The love whose means is war, whose very essence is the *mortal hatred* between the sexes!” And, thanks to Merimée, the plot has “logic even in passion, from him it has the direct line, *inexorable* necessity, but what it has above all else is that which belongs to sub-tropical zones—that dryness of atmosphere, that *limpidezza* of the air”.

In broad terms, in Nietzsche’s eyes, Wagner neglects the need for aesthetic form. In his plots as well as his music, Wagner is not consistent and straightforward; rather he is an actor and manipulator. His medium is affect and effect maximised: the brutal, the artificial, the idiotic; the sublime, the deep, the overpowering. His “unending melody” can be compared to “one’s feelings on entering the sea. Gradually one loses one’s footing and one ultimately abandons oneself to the mercy or fury of the elements: one has to swim.” The same for rhythm: “His specific effect: degeneration of the feeling for rhythm. What the Wagnerite calls rhythmical is what I call, to use a Greek metaphor, ‘stirring a swamp’.” Bizet’s music is the opposite. It achieves its “tragic accents [...] without grimaces [...] without counterfeiting of any kind”: “It is rich. It is definite. It builds, organises, completes, and in this sense it stands as a contrast to the polypus in music, to ‘endless melody’.” As well as recognising the need for musical form, being a southerner, Bizet realises the intimate relationship of music to dance, as Nietzsche puts it: “‘All that is good is easy, everything divine runs with light feet’: this is the first principle of

my aesthetics. This music is wicked, refined, fatalistic, and withal remains popular.” Wagner fails to see this: “the Germans have no feet at all, they simply have legs”.

Not only is the nineteenth century obsessed with history, it is also the century of nationalism. Nietzsche again is ‘untimely’ here: “in our rapidly moving Europe”, he writes, one has to avoid “atavistic attacks of patriotism and soil-attachment, and return once more to reason, that is to say, to ‘good Europeanism’.” “Whether we call it ‘civilisation,’ or ‘humanising,’ or ‘progress’” we are witnessing “an immense *physiological process*”, the “increasing detachment under which, climatically and hereditarily, united races originate”. In short, “Europe wants to be united”.⁵ Although Nietzsche’s geo-philosophy recognises and takes into account the different nations and cultures that have constituted themselves in their respective climates, it is on the side of the process of civilisation. The true antagonisms of geo-philosophy are not between nations or races of people, but between mindsets: even if you’re not a ‘born’ southerner, you can become a “southerner of conviction”. ‘North’ or ‘South’ are thus not places of origin, but – as the title of this publication suggests – states of body and mind. Furthermore, there are people who “know how to love the south in the north and the north in the south—the born Midlanders, the ‘good Europeans.’ It is for them that Bizet made music.”

Should we become Nietzscheans or Bizetians? Perhaps. Or perhaps not. It could be advisable to use the distancing and rationalising tool of history and see this simply as an example from the nineteenth century, a time long gone. The questions raised in this drama are perhaps clichéd, and even landscapes and climates change. Don’t forget, too, how in *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense*, Nietzsche defines ‘truth’ as “a mobile army of metaphors”. To his friend Carl Fuchs he wrote in December 1888, “What I say

about Bizet, you should not take seriously; the way I am, Bizet does not matter to me. But as an ironic antithesis to Wagner, it has a strong effect.”

1. For the notion of Nietzsche as the founder of geo-philosophy, see Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (first published in French in 1991).

2. All following quotations, unless otherwise stated, are from Nietzsche’s works *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), the self-critical introduction to the edition of *The Birth of Tragedy* (1886), *The Case of Wagner* (1888), *Ecce Homo* (1888) and *Nietzsche contra Wagner* (posthumous).

3. Cited in George H. Leiner, “To Overcome One’s Self: Nietzsche, Bizet and Wagner”, *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, No. 9/10, Spring/Autumn 1995, pp. 132–147.

4. For Nietzsche, perhaps surprisingly, the main problem of German character was not a lack or absence of sentiment, passion or compassion. The image of an ethics of blind effectiveness and cold rationality can be traced back instead to the likes of Ernst Jünger and Gottfried Benn, who – two generations later – tried to convince themselves and the world of their own iron-clad coldheartedness (as described by Helmut Lethen in his study *Cool Conduct: The Culture of Distance in Weimar Germany*, University of California Press, Oakland, 2002). But far from having no passions and emotions, Germans, as Nietzsche saw them, invested their passions into misguided and over-complicated spiritual projects, intertwining them with a vague longing for some kind of otherworldly redemption.

5. Within Nietzsche’s historical context, the idea of Europeanisation was already very revolutionary, and as we see he even sometimes transcends this perspective – as seen in the quotation above – by referencing a super-European movement that would embrace Africa as well. This given, it may seem unfair to just plainly dismiss Nietzsche as being ‘Eurocentric’ as we know it in our present globalised world, a world which Nietzsche only began to imagine.



Photographs of various singers in the role of Bizet’s *Carmen* between 1875 and 1920

THE OPERA PLOTS IN A NUTSHELL

Wagner’s *Parsifal*

An orphan kills a swan before he embarks on a mystic quest for a holy lance. This lance is known to be the only possible cure for the commander of an obscure religious brotherhood, who is suffering from a never-closing wound, the result of having sex with a witch but also a reference to Jesus. His antagonist is a vicious castrato who, in a somewhat paradox constellation, represents sexual desire. He also owns a magic garden and exploits the weak-minded witch for his evil plans. The orphan realises that the solution to all problems is just to not have sex with the witch. He thus wins the holy lance, then goes on to heal the commander, become his successor and baptise the witch (which kills her), giving her the redemption she had been longing for.

Bizet’s *Carmen*

Two women working in a cigarette factory catfight over gossip, culminating in one of them injuring the other with a knife. She is arrested but convinces the soldier leading her to prison to let her escape by promising to dance for him. Now the soldier has to go to prison for dereliction of duty, yet he has fallen in love with the woman. Returning from prison, he comes to blows with a lieutenant and a torero over the woman. As a consequence, he has to leave the city to live with the woman in the woods and become a smuggler. Unfortunately, the volatile woman has now lost all interest in him, although he is still fervently in love with her. In his jealous rage, the soldier almost kills her new man, the torero; when she tells him to leave them alone he kills her.

THE (BAD) IDEA OF NORTH

by Tod Wodicka

Perhaps smoke smells different in Russian...

Walking through a tsarist park on the outskirts of Moscow, my guide and I came to the end of a forest path. There before us: a perfect semi-circle of baby-blue porta-potties. The path went left and the path went right.

“It is like a Russian fairytale,” I was told. “If you go left, your legs will be chopped off. If you go right, you die some other way. Maybe better, maybe not so much. In Russia, the only safe way is backwards.”

“Unless you have to use the toilet,” I said.

Shrug. “Also a trap.”

Russians shrug all the time. The one place they usually don’t? These parks. In parks they’re either dressed as though they’re on business lunch breaks somewhere in Hartford, Connecticut or they’re getting married. *En masse*. Like Moonies.

Turning back the way we came through Tsaritsino Park, escaping the porta-potties and possibly much worse, we had to navigate through hundreds of weddings. It was nightmarish. Huge dresses. Shiny, tracksuit-like suits. (Many Russian men, you’ll find, look as though they’re wearing tracksuits even when they’re not. Beady little eyes. Pink muscles. Guns.) They were all being photographed near the same palace, ruin, pond or demonic Disney-like musical fountain, from which hidden speakers blasted the sort of classical music that aspirational social classes play their unborn babies to grow better brains.

The next day three Moscow metro cars derailed between stations, killing dozens of rush-hour commuters.

Shrug.

Some days later a hellmouth opened in Siberia. (Really. Look it up.)

Shrug.

A week or so after that a Malaysian airplane was shot down from the sky.

Evil shrug.

I’d been in Moscow for only a few weeks and for no good reason. It was too expensive to eat so I started smoking again. Smoking, I decided, was a safe way back. To what? I don’t know.

The Russian alphabet looks exactly like the Roman alphabet when you’re too drunk to read. There is something comforting in this. The world returned to a toddler-like zone where anything can kill you but you don’t have to really worry about it: you can’t read yet. The people who read can worry about it.

There’s something comforting in geographical confinement, too, the idea of being stuck so far north in the summer in a city that’s brutally hot but also somehow forever winterised. You can’t help imagining snow. You think of bad new analogies, metaphors, whatever. *The sun is covering the city like snow*. Muscovites don’t sit around in outdoor cafes or beer gardens – what if it suddenly started snowing? They’re weather traumatised. They are underground. The citizen commuters, silent and teeming, risking death under the city in the most Stalin-meets-*Lord of the Rings* subway system you could possibly imagine. The stations with their huge, goblin-hall pillars and superhero statues of workers, cabbages, soldiers; the gorgeous political mosaics; and everywhere you look, Lenin and his awesome pals.

If the stations are museums, then the people are the modern sartorial art running through the place, running amok. Elderly Miss Havishams on their way to a fancy ball that’s taking place thirty years ago: purple hair, gold heels, false teeth and falser diamonds. Cute five-year-old girls with their punk fathers and/or white slaver boyfriends. Babushkas with bags of you don’t want to know. Supermodel mothers and weird cave

people from Caucasus and groups of men behaving like bots in video games: it feels as though you see the same ones everywhere, the same three or four, behaving the same way. Looking at you. They have recently banned swearing in public because *holy shit* Moscow. And even though I think I saw them everywhere, these men, I now find it impossible to describe them. Life is cheap in Russia, they say. Or maybe, like in a video game, they’re just waiting for me to approach them and press A or B so they can give me a clue. Maybe they know what the hell I’m doing here. Maybe they know how I can get out.

I am here because someone I love is here.

But speaking of smoke, one night she smelled something in the apartment building we live in. She didn’t want to believe that it was smoke because if it was smoke wouldn’t there be a siren of some sort, an alarm? The building would be on fire if it was smoke and we would be in serious danger. Therefore it could not be smoke. Perhaps smoke smells different in Russian.

“Uh,” I said. “I think we should maybe get out of the building.”

We’re on the fourteenth floor. I stepped into the hallway, which smelled of sickly, burning plastic. Smoke. Not like a burning dinner, more like a burning refrigerator.

“No,” she said. “If it was a fire, there’d be an alarm by now.”

So we watched TV as our apartment slowly filled with smoke.

Twenty minutes later, a phone call alerted us to the fire trucks outside our building. Five or six of them. We went outside to find the firemen arguing, pointing, nobody quite sure what they wanted or needed to do now. Shrug. They’d driven all the way there with the flashing lights and the 1970s trucks and some of them were wearing protective boots, wasn’t that enough? Did they have to go up and put the fire out? They stood around smoking. Really they did. Did they have to take the hose all the way up there? Didn’t seem like they wanted to. There was smoke coming from a flat on the sixteenth floor, and there was no smoke alarm in the building, so we saw something eerie, half the apartments on the lower levels of the building all lit up, dreamlike, Russian people inside oblivious that the top half of the building had caught on fire. Nobody made any effort to tell them.

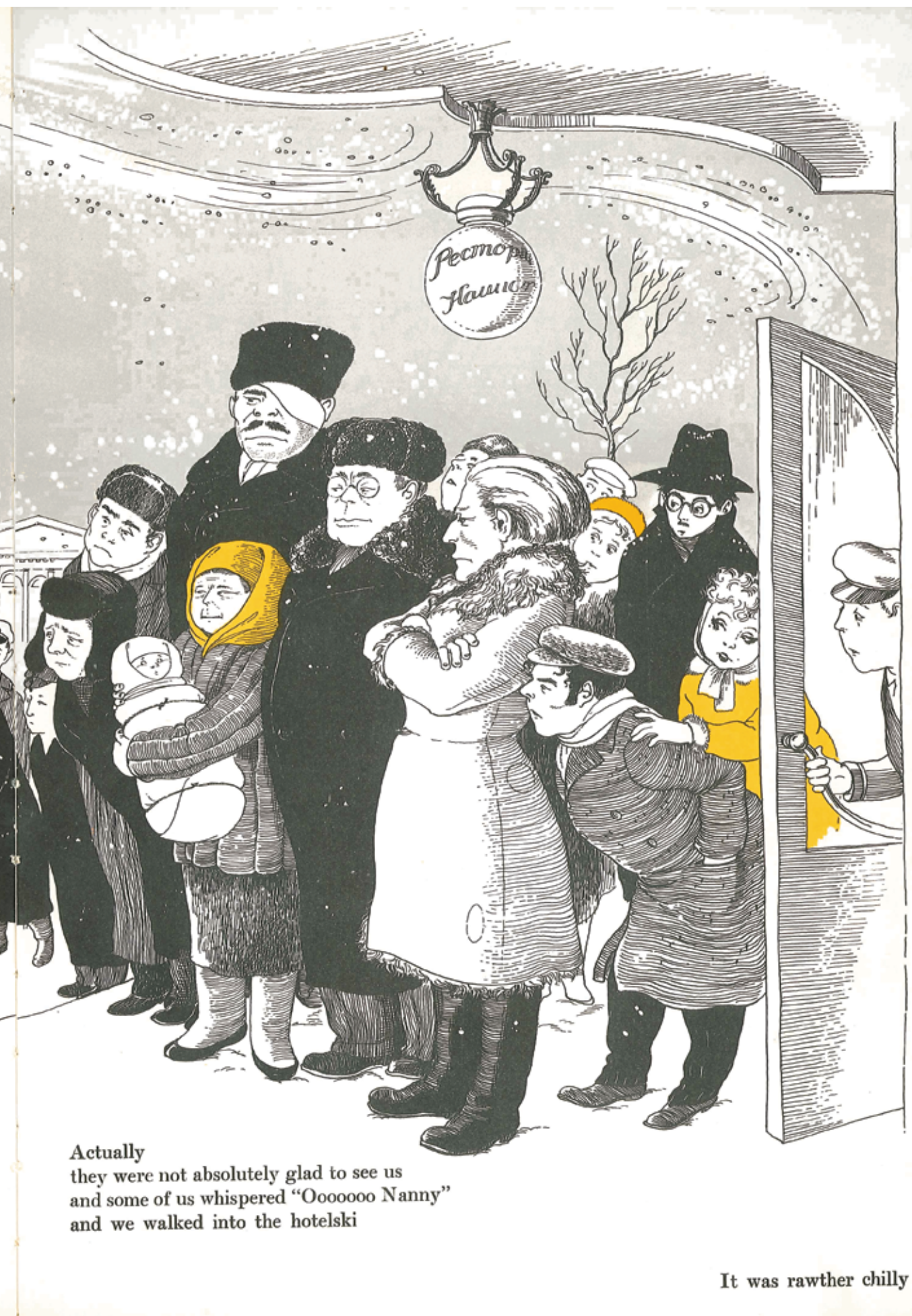
Or maybe they knew and chose to try their luck. Shrug.

Finally, the firemen made their sad, processional way into the building and up the sixteen flights of stairs. We heard crashing from the apartment that was on fire. Finally, after an hour, the smoke lessened. Then some guy ran out of the building; then a bunch of others ran back in. The fire was out and *now* they were moving quickly? Did someone find a crate of vodka? Ten minutes later they come out with a body wrapped, for some reason, in tin foil. I could see the top of the body’s head: it was burned, blackened. One foot poked out from the metallic blanket: it was crayon-red, raw. The other foot wore a partially melted shoe.

Next morning a woman told us that she was happy he had finally burned himself to death since they’d been worried he was going to do that for years and now he had done it! She was cheery. No more worry! He was a hoarder, apparently, and mentally ill, a drunk just back again from some hospital. They probably didn’t find him right away because his belongings had collapsed onto him. Like capitalism, *da?*

Russians have a very healthy attitude towards death but a very dangerous attitude towards fire safety and prevention. There’s probably no way to reconcile the two unless you’re the fire. Or on fire. Because when you’re on fire it doesn’t matter whether you go left or right or backwards. Kind of like my stay in Moscow. It just needs to run its course.

Shrug.



PINTA: ENIGMA AS A STATE OF BODY

by Jorge Alencar and Neto Machado

Choreographed chanchada: nudity, discreet zoophilia and dance

FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER IT WAS FOUNDED, the Brazilian performing arts collective Dimenti took time to think about its creative environment, considering its past in order to determine its future. It was interested not in a nostalgic continuum between then and now but in a renewal of the past as a kind of memory of the future.

This excavation process brought up political and poetic references, most of them strongly connected with the city where Dimenti is based: Salvador, the capital of Bahia in Brazil. It is a city where confusion and syncretism are organising principles, a city where sexuality is expressed at all times and everywhere, “a totally unpredictable place that acts as a powerful magnet”, as Portuguese film critic Mafalda Melo once described it.

And from this re-evaluation emerged a feature film, *Pinta* (2013). Recycling artistic materials from the past, it paved new paths for Dimenti. The piece was created through artistic collaboration, with a script written jointly by the director, the producer, the editor, one of the actors and the cinematographer. From the start, it was an intimate collaboration in which performing arts meets cinema, past meets future and artists meet each other.

Pinta proposes a creative sexuality, taking desire as a central issue, desire that goes beyond the moralism that considers perversion and normality, fetish and intimacy, depth and superficiality as oppositional. In the end, all desiring beings are in some way bizarre. Rather than adopting a traditional narrative, the film expresses desire through the physicality of the performers, shifting unexpectedly between performative settings.

Pinta is built up of scenes with varying durations and atmospheres, the audience of which becomes a kind of voyeur, watching events that range from the ordinary to the hallucinatory. Although there is no actual sex in the film, a constant erotic tension pervades. A woman prepares for suicide in her dressing room by drawing a beauty spot on her face and placing a plastic plant on her head; a crooner sings in front of an empty swimming pool for a group of regional ballet dancers; two men in cotton underwear engage in a private wrestling match; a transgender performer whips the air with her hair while listening to Tchaikovsky.

The film constructs itself as an enigma. Each scene presents a new universe, maintaining a suspense without origin and specific narrative consequences. Massimo Canevacci, an anthropologist with a long history of research on syncretism and fetishism, constructed

a concept of ‘enigma’ specifically for *Pinta*; in the film this theoretical notion is announced by a little mermaid boy at a lecture.

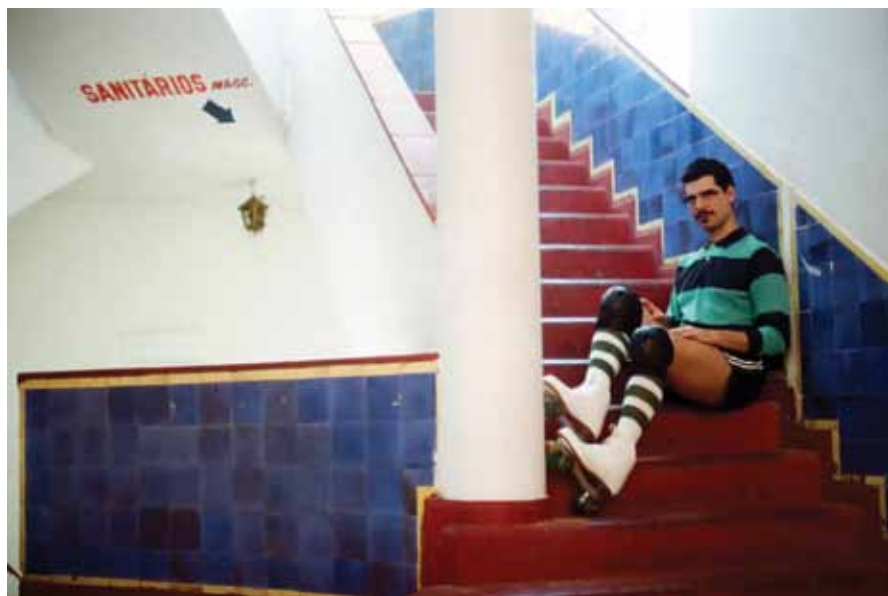
“The enigma,” writes Canevacci, “is not made from empirical evidence or concrete facts. It pushes the boundaries of rationality, it goes beyond reason. When you think the enigma is solved, it presents itself again in front of you, even more complex and powerful, and defying your ability to understand it. The enigma is incomprehensible. While the mystery is logical and rational, the enigma stands in between logic, experience and history. The enigma is connected to the myth. And the myth is full of enigmas that can never be solved. When you think you’ve solved an enigma, after a second, it presents itself again before you. Powerful and luminous.”

Known as *pornochanchada*, the Brazilian film movement that merged soft porn with carnivalesque comedies was born in a time of suppression of freedom, of conservatism and censorship during the military dictatorship. Its commercial motivations guided the intense relationship of the audience with the genre, and, after some time, its style and characters became a rousing expression of Brazilian nationality. According to the critic Adolfo Gomes, in the seventies and eighties this movement inspired American satires, such as the films of Russ Meyer, and perhaps even classics including *The Realm of the Senses* and *Deep Throat*, as well as Italian erotic comedies, among others.

By treating eroticism as an enigma and taking aesthetic risks, *Pinta* seeks to update and bring new vitality to the way sexuality has been portrayed in *pornochanchada* and other Brazilian cinema in previous decades. In so doing, it subverts the historical prejudices that class erotic films as poor-quality cinema and dissolves the boundaries between experimental and popular film, communicating with a diverse audience. Plunging into the history of a group of artists, *Pinta* also unearths the enigmas of their city and country.

Almost thirty years after the end of the dictatorship in Brazil, despite many social and political advances, the country still has one of the highest global murder rates of LGBT victims. Some of the presidential candidates in this year’s elections are driven by an overtly anti-gay religious fundamentalism. Within this context, a film like *Pinta* forces performative cracks into the oppressive conservatism that still plagues Brazilian culture. As the narrator in one of its first scenes announces, *Pinta* is a place for amplifying diffuse, decentralised, peripheral and tipsy desires.





All photos by Matheus Rocha

QUESTIONS FOR SÃO PAULO

Interview with Marieke van Hal and Galit Eilat by Marina Fokidis

The director of the Biennial Foundation and a curator of the 31st São Paulo Biennial discuss southern biennials and the World Biennial Forum 2

MARINA FOKIDIS: Another biennial? I remember a cartoon about fifteen years ago in which one man was saying to another that he was very worried about his small town, as it did yet not have its own biennial. So there's been criticism for some time about the proliferation of biennials around the globe. Yet the biennial as an institution for the promotion of contemporary art continues to thrive. What is your take on this?

MARIEKE VAN HAL: I think you're referring to a cartoon from 1999 by the artist Olav Westphalen. It reflected the thinking at the time after a wave of new biennials in the 1990s. I always wondered why this type of critique never occurred in the museum world. No one asked "Another museum?" Fortunately, we have moved on in the debate. The need for encouragement, critical discourse *and* disagreement about the biennial as a rapidly expanding institution is self-evident. The process of biennialisation is a process of transforming *how* and *where* contemporary art is produced, presented and viewed through the format of the biennial and its many locations.

One could argue that the biennial has contributed to the subversion of the former division between a centre and periphery of civilisations and has challenged the Western illusion of supremacy in the field of artistic creation and institutional representation. The ubiquitous biennial has imagined and continues to imagine a rightly global world of art. As more biennials enter the international arena, we should try to look beyond the façades of spectacle and see how biennials operate as contexts for questioning and testing forms of praxis available through art.

GALIT EILAT: In the cartoon, I think it was the mayor of the town bemoaning the lack of a biennial, which is maybe more telling than if it had been an inhabitant. I am not sure how many small-town citizens would feel the same. Nevertheless, biennials have a number of potential functions, and it is our job as curators to focus on certain aspects of them. Today we see two main tendencies of biennials – one is to more or less imitate the museum, using its methodologies of exhibition, but with time-limited research. The other is to follow the art-fair model, serving the market and the growing field of collectors. Neither of these approaches aims to investigate or answer the questions of what a biennial is – and more importantly what a biennial is *today* – and whom the biennial is for. I think these questions need to be asked first, even before questions about the local context and the biennial's own history.

From the cartoon mayor's point of view, of course, a biennial helps brand a city as a neoliberal global player. Or, at the very least, it can help to strengthen the real-estate market. So there is no doubt that he should be worried that there is no biennial in his city, as he is in danger of being left behind. From a less cynical perspective, it could be said that historically many biennials have helped to create new artistic structures and institutions in their locations and have been crucial for introducing ideas about art to a wide public. This is still true, although nowadays, of course, there are so many other ways to access contemporary art. Each case has to be considered individually. There is not one magic formula and no single successful model. For me, a biennial (or any other institution) needs to take a critical approach that manifests itself through its activities.

Juan Downey, *Mapa Mundi*
1979, oil on linen
180 x 205 cm
Photo by Harry Shunk
Courtesy of Marilyns Belt
Downey, The Juan Downey
Estate



MF: “Too many biennials in locations they should not be; too many biennials in locations they should be.” How attached should a biennial be to its location? I’m not talking so much in terms of ethnography, traditions and folk culture but rather in terms of environment and geopolitics. Are the content of the exhibitions and the setting almost interdependent? Should a biennial be conceived, organised and contextualised according to the environment in which it takes place? Or should it maintain independency as an institution and deal with global affairs in contemporary culture, regardless of its location?

MARIEKE VAN HAL: I can answer this in a general way. The most interesting biennials are those that have a correlation with the particularities or momentum of their environment. The relationship and connectivity of the biennial with its specific site is essential, as this relationship can give the biennial its unique meaning and added value. To act and remain distinct, to reach out internationally but to operate in a locally specific manner are essential ingredients for interesting and successful biennials. Geeta Kapur recently spoke about allowing the biennial to be both maverick and contextual, that is to say conjunctural. “Which means we conceive of the biennial as an institution sprung from the uncertainty, promise and antinomies of the contemporary, but firmly hooked to the historical circumstance of its birth. The conjuncture produces discourse and poetics; it asks, on the other hand, for alertness towards emancipatory praxis in fields beyond art.”

MF: ‘The South’ as a tag can be used in many different ways, for many different purposes, not necessarily all bad. There are ideas that can unify Souths beyond geographical borders. Very elusively, the climate, the perfect climate, for example. The heat, outdoors living and its side effects: sensual communication, procrastination or idleness (as a resistance to consumer-driven society, perhaps), chaos, ‘corruption’ and other southern mythologies can formulate the new notions under which people can re-unify for the better, not necessarily for the worse. As part of a fictional exercise, what if all the above qualities were virtues instead of shortcomings? What if they were the platforms upon which a soft resistance could be built against the so-called ‘Western capitalist society’ model?

MARIEKE VAN HAL: The Biennial Foundation was initiated in the South, in Athens, as you know.

GALIT EILAT: The South could be relative to where one is, geographically or mentally. Since the South is defined by the location you are in, it can be a place for a projection of different thoughts. The ‘global South’ refers to the socially and economically weaker developed half of the globe, which more or less coincides with the post-colonial world or the notion of the old ‘Third World’ (i.e. when we had a second one). It is considered to be missing appropriate technology and to have no political or economical stability. These notions now apply to certain states in southern Europe as well as to much of the rest of the world.

The nations of Africa, Central and Latin America and most of Asia face great challenges and offer real opportunities. Political, social and economic upheaval are prevalent in many of these nations; at the same time, the populations of the global South and their emerging markets offer immense hopes for economic growth, investment and cultural contribution. Without romanticising, if we see any ‘soft resistance’ to the status quo today, we see it in the South. We could look at Brazil since June 2013, at Turkey and Greece last summer and today at Hong Kong where people are fighting against neo-feudalism, against a pseudo-democratic dictatorial model and where state corruption and private cartels go hand in hand, controlling not only the economic market but also the juridical system.

I’m not sure any of this has anything to do fundamentally with climate – or even with modernism. We are living in a time when climate change is upon us and when the concept of modernity no longer carries much force.

MF: We think that this magazine is a place of encounter where people from different real and metaphorical Souths can re-negotiate the term; it’s a platform of shared intensities. How does the World Biennial Forum 2 relate to that? What do you expect from this meeting? It is the second time the forum has been held in the South. Is this of any significance? How can the southern state of mind facilitate a network?

MARIEKE VAN HAL: It is interesting that you think of Gwangju [where the first World Biennial Forum was held] as southern, as I always considered it more as eastern. In a globalised world, I guess there’s no such thing as south or east anymore. The World Biennial Forum 1 was entitled *Shifting Gravity*, and its curators Hou Hanru and Ute Meta Bauer focused on Asia as its context and continent. Now we are collaborating with the São Paulo Biennale as the hosting partner for the second forum. This is thanks to Daniel Rangel, the artistic director of the ICCo (Instituto de Cultura Contemporânea) in São Paulo, who came to visit our first forum in Gwangju, and to curator Charles Esche, who vowed to make it happen in Brazil. There were other places to take the forum, but I felt it was important to cross the globe (from east to west) like this.

Our first forum was especially geared towards biennial organisers; it was a place for them to discuss common objectives for biennial institutions and their function in society as well as to forger stronger professional alliances. With our second forum, *How to Make Biennials in Contemporary Times*, we are not only addressing biennials as institutions but also aim to include ‘new’ voices of curators and researchers in order to discuss the changes and uncertainties in today’s biennial landscape. The focus on the South is a curatorial decision. I believe we regard ‘South’, as you do, as a relation or direction rather than as a location or place on Earth. Galit can elaborate more on this.

GALIT EILAT: The World Biennial Forum 2 is an opportunity to focus on southern biennials and their context in relationship to the wider history of biennials. In Brazil itself there are at least four biennials, and around South America a new one pops up almost every year. Some of them survive, and some, after a few editions, don’t. This year, the Bahia Biennial was reinstated after a forty-year hiatus. During the forum, we would like to look at biennials from the point of view of the southern hemisphere. From here, we observe, for instance, another socialist history of biennials in the 1970s that has been largely ignored. Mainly, however, the focus will be on recent biennials in Dakar, Istanbul, Jakarta and São Paulo. Other southern biennials will come into the picture too, so that we can gain a better understanding of and analyse the cooperation between biennials and their different contexts throughout the global South.

The four focus cities have been staging biennials in different forms over the past twenty years. During this period, they have invented new traditions and created suitable structures to support and develop them. At a time when the relationship between artistic desire and political will is under negotiation and when biennials are seen both as opportunities for harvesting cultural capital and threats to the smooth operation of the status quo, these biennials will serve as the anchor points for a more general discussion about the potential of contemporary biennials. It would be good to imagine that such a forum and its discussion could also influence the terms under which northern or hegemonic state biennials are understood.

MF: Defining what biennials are is not of such great importance in the first place. Definitions are just a beginning and are being constantly transformed. What is a museum? What is an art centre? Etcetera. It is more interesting to find out how the encounter between the place, the art and the people for a finite period can be beneficial for all parties at the time of the biennial and beyond. Can the hype of a large-scale visual-art event benefit other areas beyond the market economy? And if so, what are those areas, and how do they benefit?

MARIEKE VAN HAL: We can look at biennials both in terms of their respective iterations and as the sum of separate, consecutive

ephemeral events. To answer your question, I believe it’s important to look at the bigger picture. What are the legacies of biennials? Many have been struggling for freedom of expression, for the right to voice critical, creative and alternative claims. Think of the biennials of Havana, Gwangju and Johannesburg (now defunct), to mention a few well-known ones. The recent resignation of Yongwoo Lee, co-founder of the Gwangju Biennale, was significant, an act of protest against the curbing of an artist’s voice.

Anthony Gardner, who will participate in our forum, and Charles Green are currently researching biennials of the global South. Their findings show that many ‘peripheral’ biennials don’t sit comfortably within the stereotype of biennials as a neoliberal symptom. “It was often a socialist, or at least socialist-inspired internationalism that subtended their rhetoric and objects,” they write. Biennial studies have only just begun.

GALIT EILAT: It is hard to think about biennials without considering how they influence the market and, conversely, how the market influences the biennials. The art market is not a bad thing, and it was, and still can be, important to the development of public art structures through encouraging private interest. If we consider the global South, we see that biennials without the support of the private sector would struggle to survive. Brazil has an unusual situation in which public money is distributed by the private sector, for instance. In many other southern countries, there is almost no public or governmental support for art initiatives in general; without private support, many museums, art centres or biennials would not exist in places such as Lebanon, Turkey or Egypt.

The problem is not to do with the support offered by the market economy or sponsors; it is what a biennial promises its sponsors in return: how much funder visibility and (mis)use of the exhibition space takes place, for instance; how much control donors have over content; how exclusive the events need to be. I believe that the expectations of sponsors are reducing the curatorial room for manoeuvre at a biennale, and this is reflected by the recent artist protests. I think there are two main reasons for this.

The first, and the most important one, is the relation between symbolic value and market value. Until ten years ago, market value grew in relation to an artwork’s symbolic value. It meant, in general, that a work’s presentation in museum exhibitions and references to it in academic and art-press writing – in short, a work’s overall visibility – determined the market value. But, in the last few years, we have seen a separation of these two forms of value except in a very few international museums and biennials. Market value has largely replaced symbolic value, and a higher market value is derived more from within the commercial circuit itself. The significance of art works is judged not by the way they are read but by the way they sold, by the process of their acquisition, while the slower accretion of symbolic value (too slow for the market?) goes on in a separate forum.

The second reason is in relation to the first, but is more indirect. The demand for more, better, faster biennials means the hunt for sponsors becomes more desperate and decreases the organisers’ capacity to negotiate what will be given in return. Certain aspects of artistic ownership are being negotiated without the artists’ or curators’ approval: logos mysteriously appear; extravagant parties are thrown, excluding all but the sponsors and their clients. Such activities have a direct influence on the narrative and the content of a biennial (or a museum) for the ‘mere’ general public in whose name the activity is organised. The public interest becomes secondary and the artistic or curatorial narrative is subjugated to financial control and dominated by social exclusion.

MF: I was reading a statement by Charles Esche in a recent feature for the São Paulo Biennial: “We need to use the elite biennial to give a platform for those communities.” Is the biennial a step? In whichever direction? Or is it an excuse? A hijack for the good cause? Or an insider’s joke?

GALIT EILAT: One only has to look at the history of the São Paulo Biennial. In 1951, the biennial was founded in the wake of European immigration, in order to bring Western culture to Latin America and to insinuate Brazilian artists into the European art system. More than sixty years later, the board of the biennial has essentially the same aims, even if the rhetoric is different. The gap between rich and poor here has only shifted slightly, and the relation between the masses and the elite is basically one of charity. What I mean is that the public is expected to behave in ways that are controlled and sanctioned by the elite. The biennial is a gift given by those with money. And the reaction of the public ought to be one of gratitude.

It is true that in recent years a lot has been done. Entrance to the biennial and educational activities are free and open to everyone, and visitors can come as many times as they want to see the exhibition or attend a guided tour and symposiums. Yet the educational activity emphasises the extraordinariness of the visiting experience: it is a once-every-two-years exception to daily life. I fear that the size and scale of the biennial produce a feeling of awe, maybe even of enervation, rather than acting as a call to action. Also, for many São Paulo citizens, free entry is not enough. The Ciccillo Matarazzo Pavilion is not easy to access with public transport, and the bus ticket is not affordable for everyone, especially for the communities who live in the city’s peripheries. You may remember that one of the triggers for last winter’s protests was that the government imposed an increase of twenty cents on bus fares. Transport is a completely politicised issue here, and the biennial creates conditions of exclusion that are to some extent beyond its control.

As curators, we tried to mitigate some of this, but we could only ever be partially successful. We tried to work more closely with the 200 educators, although there were difficulties in overcoming internal hierarchies that were already in place. We tried to offer agency to cultural activities in the periphery though twice-weekly ‘Saraus’, where people from poorer communities and the indigenous people of the São Paulo region could express themselves directly to the public. We worked with a number of Brazilian artists who are directly concerned with education, transport and social control and sometimes introduced them to international artists who we felt might be compatible. These were our ways of giving voice to communities other than the elite, but it would ideally need to go further next time.

MF: In his book *Factories of Knowledge, Industries of Creativity*, Gerald Raunig describes beautifully the condition of assembly and the act of reterritorialisation as a temporary concentration that does not oppose dispersion but rather supplements it. He implies that the key question in this situation is how to mutually interweave the fabrication of smooth and streaking spaces. Can you relate this notion to the São Paulo Biennial or the World Biennial Forum 2?

GALIT EILAT: I think I have partly answered that. The São Paulo Biennial is considered to be the most important one in South America. In this biennial we have tried to make use of this reputation to create a platform for a society here that is (hopefully) in transition. We saw ourselves as trying to institute ways of being (to use another Raunig concept) in the biennial that could create different patterns of occupation. We tried to work horizontally as a curatorial group, and we organised a curatorial toolbox workshop that aims to pass our experiences onto a younger generation. We tried to address issues such as gender, religion, rights to the city and rights to abortion within a Latin American context, so that there could be a widening of the reference points available in Brazil rather than a constant attempt to apply US or European models – or simply to declare a Brazilian exceptionalism. These could be seen as modest attempts at the reterritorialisation of the Brazilian national narrative. I like to think some of that was sustainable, not simply temporary, but it is up to others here to pick up the gauntlet. The World Biennial Forum 2 is more an attempt to construct new exhibition histories that allow the voice of the South to be heard.

SOUTH OF HEAVEN: ON ART AND CYNICISM

by Philipp Kleinmichel

Towards a radicalisation of the cynicism that pervades the (art) world

IN THE LAST DECADE, the art world has increasingly been described as a cynical place. At least since the 1980s, and as a result of a long tradition of critique, all sublime beliefs in art have been deconstructed. As heirs of avant-gardist art practices, we have only just begun to understand that all criteria used to distinguish between good and bad artworks in regard to their aesthetics and to their political and critical essence are gone. The same tradition has also led to a sublation of all notions identifying the artist as genius or as author. The potential effects of beauty are understood as being utterly limited in this regard; so too are the attempts to enlighten people through the use of aesthetic shock tactics and other avant-gardist procedures. As a result, many of the key players in the art world have lost their illusions about art as a practice through which to actively and critically engage with the contemporary world. It's therefore no surprise that beauty and avant-garde procedures have become rather questionable categories – and it is precisely for this reason that they have been at the centre of many discussions, be it the discourse about the Neo-avant-garde by Peter Bürger, Benjamin Buchloh and Hal Foster, or the discursive hype about the return of aesthetics and the work of French philosopher Jacques Rancière in the last decade.

In this general development of the art world and its institutions, all images, objects and things can potentially be understood as art – a fact Boris Groys has described as “aesthetic equality”. This development – determined by the immanent dynamic of the art world as well as by its external relations to other social fields – has increasingly generated a cynical consciousness, finding its form in an inconvenient suspicion: if everything can potentially be understood as art, if all criteria to differentiate between good and bad art and, accordingly, all attempts to refer to qualities of authorship seem to be deconstructed, then those who make it in the art world do so not because they are more skilled or intelligent, or because they have the ability to produce a beautiful or sublime artwork, but because of the inherent corruption within art institutions and their networks. More neutrally stated, networking has become not only the main way of garnering attention in contemporary art but also an object of interest itself that is increasingly exhibited.

In many ways, it can be argued that this aspect of the contemporary art world is a phenomenon central to contemporary Western society in general. In the early 1980s, when Peter Sloterdijk's *Critique of Cynical Reason* was lauded as a perfect example of post-modernist

Christopher Wool, *Blue Fool*, 1990, enamel on aluminium, 274.3 x 182.9 cm
© Christopher Wool



theory, there already seemed to be no place left for illusions. By then, the idea of communism as providing the possibility of a playful life without economic and state repressions had, in one way or another, lost its magic and persuasion. On the contrary, for most people in the West, it increasingly appeared as a rather dangerous and naïve utopian illusion. However, the successful ideological critique of the progressive political movements based on this very idea was nonetheless successful in destroying and deconstructing all other illusions.

And so, through the great critics of religion, we have learned to look at religion as a functional illusion: God and the church functioned to enable political power. A little later, it was shown that the belief in a reasonable progress of history and enlightenment had turned into its opposite: progress became seen as irrational. But more humiliating and more effective for our understanding of our very selves was psychoanalysis's disillusioning discovery. Proving that we are never really ourselves, never really the moral untouchable heroes and enlightened reasonable beings we are supposed to be according to our moral and ethical ideals, but that we are driven instead by unconscious and irrational desires, psychoanalysis undermined any moral and ethical understanding, and thus the core concepts of the Enlightenment. This belief was already made explicit, when the older, disillusioned Freud noted, with quite some cynicism, that it would be better not to teach children such incorrect ideas and morals about the inherently good and trustworthy essence of human beings. Instead, children should learn to always expect the worst from the other to prepare themselves for society and be spared some of the worse disappointments and later life crises.

As a result of this long chain of disillusionments, cynicism was, as Sloterdijk believed, no longer a possible subjective point of view; rather, it had become an objective reality of Western culture, simply because every single individual of the democratised Western world had, by the 1980s, always understood how things really work. These kinds of cynicisms and disillusionments had become part of a common consciousness in all fields of social life – religion, science, politics – and were ready to be identified by theorists such as Peter Sloterdijk. If no realm of life, not even the most ethical and morally conditioned realm, seemed to be free from cynicism, today, a few decades later, there is no doubt it has reached the art world as well.

For Sloterdijk, this condition leads to a new stage of civilisation's discontent. For despite the cultural atmosphere of disillusionment, there were, and there still are, moral and ethical values, serving not only as guidelines and principles for human behaviour, but also forcing us to behave in a certain way, to follow the rules of law, which are controlled by all kinds of state institutions. Western educated individuals – already enlightened about the constraints, the injustices and structures of their own social reality – still live in a system that, according to its structural material, economic and moral foundations, has no potential to ever be fundamentally changed. In his devastating analysis, one of the key questions Peter Sloterdijk tries to answer is how we should position ourselves if we have no choice other than to be cynical.

His answer is relatively clear: we have at least three options. Despite, and at the same time, because of our disillusionment, we can affirm the world as it is, as a given necessity, never to be fundamentally changed. In this way, we can continue to behave in accordance with the prevailing morals and ethical facades, since we understand these as the best way to become successful

and to achieve social recognition and positions in the social fields – be it as managers, brokers, philosophers, artists or political activists. In other words, if we corrupt ourselves, we become as corrupted as the world, and by establishing our careers we reproduce the very corruption that destroyed our illusions and ideals in the first place. Sloterdijk calls this most attractive and common position a “diffuse cynicism”.

The second option would be to take the opposite stance and to refuse social life and its institutions altogether, to refuse culture with all its values and rules, with all its fashions and trends. In other words, this would entail reducing the potentiality of our individual life to a sad minimum. For Sloterdijk, the culture of the 1980s was characterised by both positions, each an expression of a cynical consciousness, which he defined famously as an “enlightened false consciousness”, a consciousness disabused of illusions, but nonetheless still wrong. Wrong because, driven by such a cynical consciousness, one either affirms the wrong corrupted world, the wrong corrupted life as objectively given, and reproduces its social structures, giving up at the same time all attempts to transform the world into a happier, funnier and more lustful place – or, if one refuses the cultural developed world altogether, one not only gives up on trying to making the corrupt world a better place, but also dismisses the very potential every human carries to become a fulfilled person and human being.

But despite such an “enlightened false consciousness”, Sloterdijk saw a third possibility: there is also the chance to radicalise the predominant cynicism. To build a theory of such a radicalisation would be, as Sloterdijk believed, the last task of philosophy after it has already come to its end. In order to radicalise cynicism, he argued, one has to understand its philosophical core and return to its origins in the ancient tradition of the Kynics. As a radicalised version of the cynic, the modern Kynic does not have to give up their differences with the world, nor affirm the wrong world, but should be able to attack and criticise shallow facades and moral, ethical and cultural values with humour and irony. A systematic philosophical attack would be, according to Sloterdijk, something like Nietzsche's gay science, which systematically understands, recognises and reveals the instances of a world and time out of joint.

Given the options outlined above about how to position oneself in a cynical disenchanted world, awareness of the situation of the art world can equally be seen as a cynical enlightened consciousness. Once we can see past the illusions of the art world, there is nothing left but art business. Under these conditions, nothing matters more than the appearance, or the fetish, as Adorno would doubtlessly say: what counts is the number of exhibitions, the reputation of the venues where the exhibitions take place, the people with whom one has exhibited, and the prominence and number of critics who have discussed the work in certain more or less prestigious magazines. The art world has become the place of networked algorithms. If we are to be cynical, we might say that this is the place where a vital careerist and opportunist can make it. But according to Sloterdijk's analysis, one does not need to be cynical, because the options available are not limited to becoming a careerist artist, curator or critic or to give up one's existence in the art world altogether – it is also possible to develop a good, functioning kynical art practice. It is, however, entirely possible that this has never really existed and never will. What exactly would such a practice entail?

JOHN BERGER: BETWEEN PERMANENT RED AND THE BLACK BOX OF THE UNIVERSE

by Nikos Papastergiadis

“If creativity seeks companionship with the universe, then it begins
in the process of collaboration”



Nikos Papastergiadis and John Berger, Quincy, France, 1995

HOW DOES ART OFFER AN IMAGE OF THE WORLD, and how does the imagination create a world? The fascination with the transformative function of the imagination has never dropped from the centre of John Berger's practice as an artist, writer and critic. In the fifties and sixties, Berger was an outspoken advocate of social realism and had little patience with the formalist perspectives in art criticism. Formal innovations are important for him but they are never seen in a vacuum; they always come hand in hand with aspirations for social transformation. This axiomatic interweaving of the politics of art and the art of politics has always characterised his writing. Berger's politics is, as he has reaffirmed in *Hold Everything Dear* (2007), still Marxist, but in my opinion his outlook now also attends to the relationship between creativity and cosmology.

This complex outlook is most evident in Berger's recent evocation of the places of belonging in *Bento's Sketchbook* (2011). Through the juxtaposition of stories in which strangers find momentary recognition of each other in small gestures of hospitality, to the meditations on the writing of the philosopher Baruch Spinoza, Berger provides an optic that oscillates between the banalities of everyday life and the widest horizons of the cosmos. Belonging is not exclusively pinned to a singular point of origin in this world. It is not even tied to a transnational ideology. It is embedded in something that is wider and deeper. Our view is open to the horizons of the infinite and yet focused on the production of a form that can make the infinite comprehensible. Aesthesis begins with this kind of sensory awareness of the world and aesthetic imagination takes on the task of embracing the whole.

To put it briefly, I will argue that throughout Berger's writing we can trace the outline of a double claim on the historical modality of the aesthetic imagination, which produces images that come out of history but are not bound by or the sum of specific historical forces. Imagination simultaneously reassembles elements that exist in a given period and also reproduces them anew.

In the midst of Cold War-period debates on art and politics, Berger asserted in *Permanent Red* (1960) that “imagination is not, as it is sometimes thought, the ability to invent; it is the capacity to disclose that which exists” (p. 61). At this point in time, the revelatory function of the imagination was given a determinant role over all other dimensions. The duty of the artist was defined in terms of a pursuit of truth. Thus art was understood to deliver more virtuous forms of ethical conduct and express a transformative agenda of radical politics. It was imbued with an important corrective task: to clarify ambiguities, break through restrictions and overcome false hierarchies. Through art we could *see through* the distortions that blurred reality, blocked solidarity and delayed justice.

In the past decade, while these ethical commitments and political values have been reaffirmed, there has also been a stronger attention to aesthetics. Berger has neither retreated into an academic fascination with aesthetic theory, nor adopted a position of mystical detachment. His attempt to articulate the visions of the world that are constructed by other artists is also an approach that makes his own sensory awareness of the world more explicit. By focusing on the manner in which art makes a world even as it represents the world, Berger is extending his understanding of the function of the imagination beyond an evaluation of its political objectives and ethical sincerity. His observations of the social and political conditions that are represented in a specific work of art are now more directly linked to ruminations on how an artwork is expressive of a general vision of our surroundings.

This process of rumination gives greater credence to the use of sensory faculties for grasping the realm of what is possible in the world. From this perspective, art not only reveals an existing truth but also provides the means for exploring new connections and wider resonances. For instance, of Cézanne's late paintings, Berger notes the “complementarity between the equilibrium of the body and the inevitability of landscape” by comparing his depiction of rocks in a forest to the intimacy of armpits. Berger sees these paintings as prophetic expressions about creation. The creation of the world appears in the sense of expectancy that comes from the minute interplay between the animate and inanimate. The revelatory function of art is complemented with a connective and harmonic version of aesthetics.

Berger's account of how creative acts are interpreted has seemingly shifted from a form of strident and activist critique to a more poetic and open-ended process of engagement. In the early period, from the fifties to the late seventies, he defined the role of the critic in rather combative terms, fighting the evil that oppresses people: the task of the critic was to show how an artist's work can provide a deeper sense of human wholeness and what Berger termed an “expanded awareness of our potentiality”. In his most recent essays, while his attention to the political details of oppression has not diminished, there is an attempt to address these within a broader framework. This is not an entirely new step; rather, it is a move from ideological critique towards a genre that gives more space to the sensory awareness of the actual world. This genre resembles the mode of writing that Michael Taussig calls “fabulation” and Bruno Latour “poetic writing”. Reflecting on his own critical approach, Berger tells us in *About Looking* (1980) that his attention is often captured by a “living” detail and explains how this provides an entry point into the wider “field” of the work. However, in a later essay, he reflects on his approach in a more enigmatic

Almay's new lipsticks are a blaze of frosted colour.

When the results of the quality control monitoring are not satisfactory, the laboratory must conduct an investigation to determine the cause of the problem and implement corrective actions. The laboratory must document the investigation and corrective actions taken. The laboratory must also document the results of the investigation and corrective actions taken.

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And our six here shows just some of the good things we've got. Above us is the summit deck with Olympic. The others are: a room of Pleasant Company Scenic, Leaning Tower, and Viewfinder, and Dishes, with Christmas and a fireplace. All of these are on the 11th floor.

Wolery's Top Sex
lights: for the
anti-conflict group

manner. He recounts a dream in which he was standing before a swinging door, but then teases us by stating that he “magically unremembered” how it opened. These are tantalising comments, invoking tension between the boundless whole and the grounded particular that recurs in all of Berger’s reflexive statements on art. The organising principle of creativity requires both human intimacy and a cosmic sweep. Berger does not shirk from this magnificent duty. His 2001 essay on the double movement of creation, “Steps Towards a Small Theory of the Visible (for Yves)” (in *The Shape of a Pocket*), concludes with the words of the Chinese painter Shitao: “The brush is for saving things from chaos.”

Creation Stories as Companionship

In the opening sentences of *Ways of Seeing* (1972), Berger posits: “Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it speaks.” This highlights the priority of sensory awareness to *logos* – the articulation of thought into language. However, it is the following passage that catapults us from the source of the senses to the widest frame, as he states that this aesthetic knowledge is the attempt “to establish our place in the surrounding world”. Most of *Ways of Seeing* is a trenchant polemic against the restrictions that ‘normalise’ the modes of perception in capitalist societies. However, it also provides an evocation of the inherent potential to revitalise and expand our consciousness of the indivisible experience of being surrounded by the world. Considerable attention has been given to the polemical aspect of Berger’s writing, but not to his poetic awareness of the cosmos.

“Ways of seeing” usually refers to a ‘patterned’ mode of perception that reflects a personal inclination, a cultural disposition or at best a global consciousness. Amongst artists this pattern is expressed in a specific aesthetic form. It provides a reference point that coils its way throughout their life’s work. This process of aesthetic reiteration is usually addressed as a consequence of psychological drives or as a persistent response to intractable social issues. It is presumed that the artist returns to this *topos*, or persists with a specific *tropos*, because the psyche has been locked into an obsessive and compulsive mode. Or else there is the view that the structures of social conflict are of such indomitable force that the artist cannot help continually coming back to confront social tensions. These two models would restrict the function of creativity to being a consequence of the individual’s psychic make-up or a confrontation with the inevitable forces of social inequality. But Berger’s writing on art and creativity can also be explored from another perspective. The third way would consider whether a way of seeing is also expressive of the link between the artistic imaginary and cosmology. It would turn to face the way the visible order carries within it multiple dimensions and is open to new formations.

“Our customary visible order is not the only one: it co-exists with other orders. Stories of fairies, sprites, ogres were a human attempt to come to terms with this co-existence. Hunters are continually aware of it and so can read signs we do not see. Children feel it intuitively because they have the habit of hiding behind things. There they discover the interstices between different sets of the visible.”

In this passage from the collection of essays *The Shape of a Pocket* (p. 5), Berger teases out the keen sensitivities and wide-eyed sensibilities that allow artists to find connections we would normally gloss over in everyday life. However, the point of this evocation of co-existent sets of the visible is neither simply a reconnaissance mission of missing signs, nor an excavation of the ruined symbols that would otherwise disappear from the field of vision. Rather, it is a more ambiguous gesture of registration of multiple and more supple ways of seeing. How do we mark out the features

of this ‘creative’ way of seeing, and how is it connected to a way of living with the world – and by this I mean not just the earth, but the cosmos as a whole?

Despite a lifetime of writing on artistic creativity and throughout his persistent reflections on the ontological bonds that link a person to the world, there is no explicit creation story in Berger’s work. In his meditative book *And Our Faces, As Brief as Photos* (1984), he drew on Mircea Eliade’s examination of the mythological accounts that posit a connection between a person, their ancestry, the home and the universe.

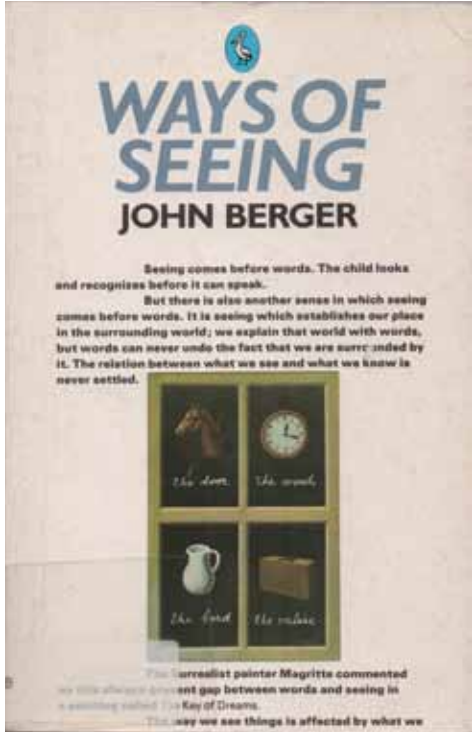
“Originally home meant the centre of the world – not in a geographical, but in an ontological sense. Mircea Eliade has demonstrated how home was the place from which the world could be *founded*. A home was established, as he says, “at the heart of the real.” In traditional societies, everything that made sense of the world was real; the surrounding chaos existed and was threatening, but it was threatening because it was *unreal*. Without a home at the centre of the real, one was not only shelterless, but also lost in nonbeing, in unreality. Without a home everything was fragmentation.

Home was the centre of the world because it was the place where a vertical line crossed with a horizontal one. The vertical line was a path leading upwards to the sky and downwards to the underworld. The horizontal line represented the traffic of the world, all the possible roads leading across the earth to other places. Thus, at home, one was nearest to the gods in the sky and to the dead of the underworld. This nearness promised access to both. And at the same time, one was at the starting point and, hopefully, the returning point of all terrestrial journeys.” (pp. 55–56)

The intersection between the vertical and horizontal axes is for Berger the nexus at which meaning both arises and is secured. It is simultaneously a confirmation point and a platform for critical self-understanding. This is a crucial conjunction. While Berger rejects the simplistic modern tales that equate individual freedom with leaving home, he is also not proclaiming that ancient cultural values are static. What is at stake is a more complex negotiation between the vicissitudes of an individual’s life history and the wisdom that is condensed into cultural values. Rather than rejecting traditional cultures as being mired in superstition and bound by oppressive hierarchies, Berger is more concerned in exploring the ways they provide a source of knowledge that can furnish contemporary guidance and understanding. In the more recent collection of essays on art and the politics of resistance, *Hold Everything Dear* (2007), Berger recalls a gesture of consolation from the Islamic tradition.

“A small brass bowl called a Fear Cup. Engraved with filigree geometric patterns and some verses from the Koran arranged in the form of a flower. Fill it with water and leave it outside under the stars for a night. Then drink the water whilst praying that it will alleviate the pain and cure you. For many sicknesses the Fear Cup is clearly less effective than a course of antibiotics. But a bowl of water which has reflected the time of the stars, the same water from which every living thing was made, as is said in the Koran, may help resist the stranglehold.” (p. 73)

The strength of this sentimental gesture is that it establishes water as the conductor of the universe’s life force. While antibiotics can cure by eliminating some harmful bacteria, it is water that is adopted as the medium that connects the individual with the universe. Berger claims that this symbolic act of union provides



All IMAGES: Pages from the book *Ways of Seeing* by John Berger, Sven Blomberg, Chris Fox, Michael Dibb and Richard Hollis (BBC and Penguin, London, 1972). Based on the BBC television series with John Berger

a sense of release from the crippling feeling of helplessness and insignificance. It takes away the pain of feeling isolated. Towards the end of the book he quotes from the Caribbean cultural theorist Edouard Glissant, who argues that “the way to resist globalization is [...] to imagine what is the first sum of all possible particularities and to get used to the idea that, as long as a single particularity is missing, globality will not be what it should be for us” (p. 117). He then adds quotations from Emily Dickinson, Spinoza and contemporary resistance fighters that express wonder at the ever-present manifestation of the eternal and compare the freedom gained from the overthrow of tyranny to the reclamation of the power to create the world anew.

Some common elements and a recurring structure can be found in these stories. They contain a shared pathway that moves from isolation to connection, and they promote a political view on equality and freedom that includes the sense of wonder. Crosscutting these narratives of social solidarity and political emancipation is the work of imagination. From these stories, we can see how the source and frame of creativity is presented not just in terms of its outcomes, such as its capacity to give new form to the meaning of either an object or a relationship with others in the world; it is also intimated that creativity stems from a desire for companionship.

And expressing the desire for companionship is at the heart of Berger’s evocation of creation, not merely the production of a pure idea that can acquire material form, or the discovery of a source from which growth proceeds. It is of note that when Berger acknowledges that Michelangelo was a figure who “assumed at the very last possible historical moment [...] the Renaissance role of the artist as supreme creator”, his focus is not on the majesty of formal compositions – for this would be akin to staring at the finger when God was pointing to the light – but on the perverse conjuring of the very act of creation. For Michelangelo, this creation story was itself a manifestation of a creation fantasy. Staring up at the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, Berger notices that this male artist assumed the ability of giving birth: “The whole ceiling is really about Creation and for him, in the last coil of his longing, Creation meant everything imaginable being born, thrusting and flying from between men’s legs.” (“Michelangelo”, *The Shape of a Pocket*, p. 98–99)

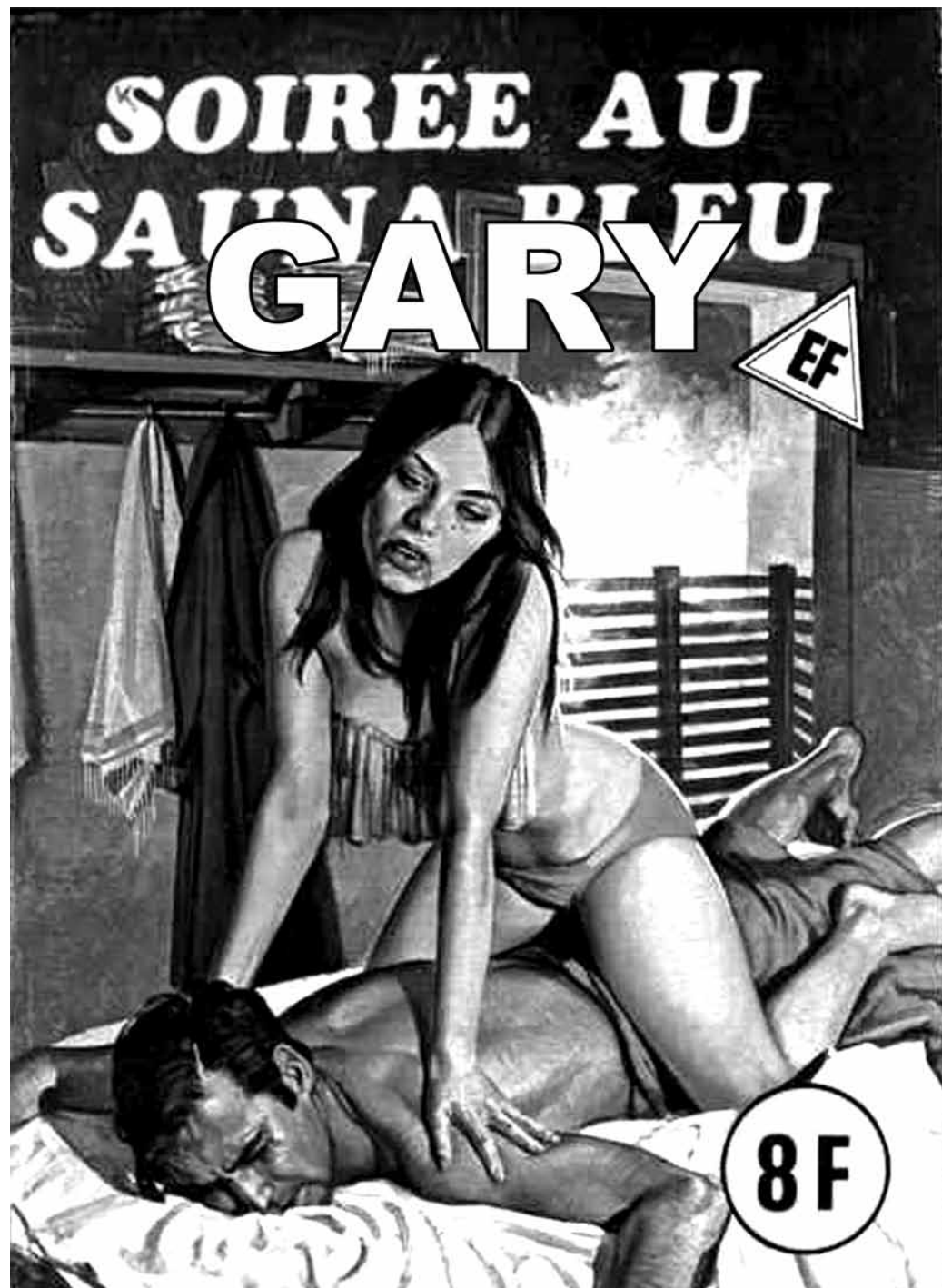
For the generation of art critics that preceded Berger, such as Herbert Read and Kenneth Clark, the idea of the artist as Promethean creator was a given. One of the primary functions of *Ways of Seeing* was to establish an alternative frame for interpreting the ‘mysterious forms’ of art and provide a more grounded approach for evaluating the agency of the artist. Hence, in a later essay, Berger makes explicit his rejection of the illusion that the artist stands above society, draws on mystical forces and creates new forms with divine authority. Berger insists that there is no real autogenesis in art. He sees artists as receivers and beneficiaries of signs being sent to them. Creation comes from the artist’s ability to give form to what they have received. Hence, if creativity seeks companionship with the universe, then it begins in the process of collaboration.

To conclude, Berger’s early work adopted an internationalist perspective on art and politics that was closely affiliated to the New Left. This robust cosmopolitan vision was embedded in an anti-colonial and transnational revolutionary ideology. However, Berger also confessed to being both a “bad Marxist”, in that he had an aversion to power, and a “romantic” who upheld the capacity for subjective intuitions to keep him open to the mysteries of art, love and the universe. The interplay between this overt political stance and implicit subjective union with others has taken new dimensions in his recent writings on art. It has led to a cosmopolitan belonging that combines a celestial and terrestrial sense of unity.

COMICS BEYOND NORTH

by Juan Canela

From a photo novella distributed in episodes around Cairo to an imaginary propagandist comic book, Francesc Ruiz's projects create unexpected spaces for resistance and communication



Francesc Ruiz, *Gary* (cover of the Paris issue), 2013



Francesc Ruiz, *Gary* (from the Bogota issue), 2013

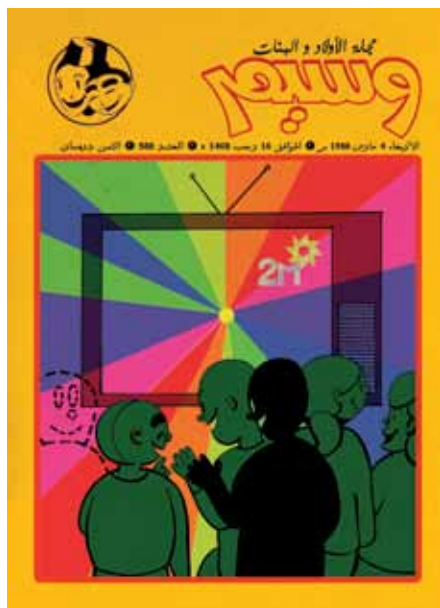
1.

Gary is in Bogota, following the trail of *Sukia*, a comic-book series created by Renzo Barbieri and originally published by the Milanese house Edifumetto from 1977 to 1986. He and his friend stop and look across the street: “Gary, look! There’s the comic store!”

Once inside, Gary says, “They have several issues of *Sukia*. Look, here’s the Colombian edition published by Cormeran. Wow!! It’s issue number 134!! That means they’ve published the whole collection here, and *Sukia* is a success. And look, they have other translated Edifumetto collections.”

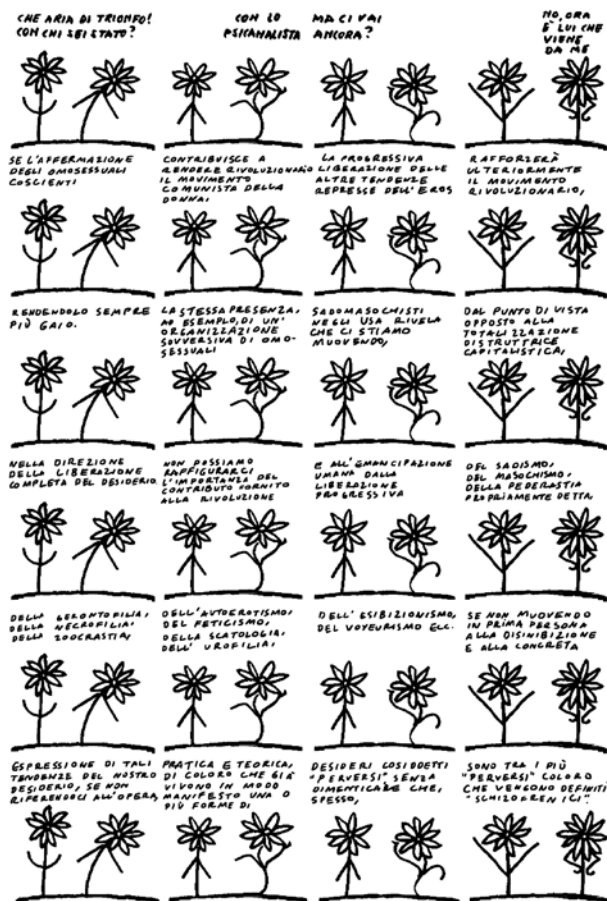
Gary has been travelling around other cities, such as Milan, Paris, Brussels and Barcelona, all the places where *Sukia* has been published. Gary himself is one of the main characters of *Sukia*, which belongs to what is known as ‘erotic Italian fumetti’, a phenomenon that enjoyed great success during the late seventies and early eighties. The comic chronicles the adventures of a vampire member of the jet set (physically based on Ornella Mutti) and her gay butler Gary. Together they travel the world, uncovering the most unlikely mysteries and maintaining active sex lives – this is a source of constant competition between Sukia and Gary. More than 60 percent of the content is homoerotic, and as such *Sukia* is clearly ‘closeted’, sold in kiosks as an erotic ‘heterosexual’ comic. With 165 issues and a circulation of tens of thousands of copies sold across Belgium, France, Spain and Colombia, *Sukia* is, without doubt, one of the longest running and popular comic series in LGBT history. Yet, because it hasn’t been translated into English, it has been omitted from the canon of LGBT comics by the Anglo-Saxon-dominant field of cultural studies, even though it has had a huge impact globally.

This latest Gary adventure is a recent project by Catalan artist Francesc Ruiz (Barcelona, 1971), who resurrects Gary, accompanying him on this travels. The artist himself has lived in the five aforementioned cities, and, as in other Ruiz projects, these new comics base their plot on real, lived experiences. *Gary* is proposed as a vehicle to recover the comic and claim *Sukia*’s – and Gary’s – legacy within LGBT culture. The project deals with the distribution of pornographic comics, but also with the dissemination and popularisation of the sexual-liberation ideology of the seventies.



ABOVE:
Francesc Ruiz, *Wasim* 1988, 2014

OPPOSITE PAGE:
Francesc Ruiz, *Wasim* 1995, 2014



Francesc Ruiz, *FIORI! Psicoanalista*, 2013

2.

One flower talking to another:

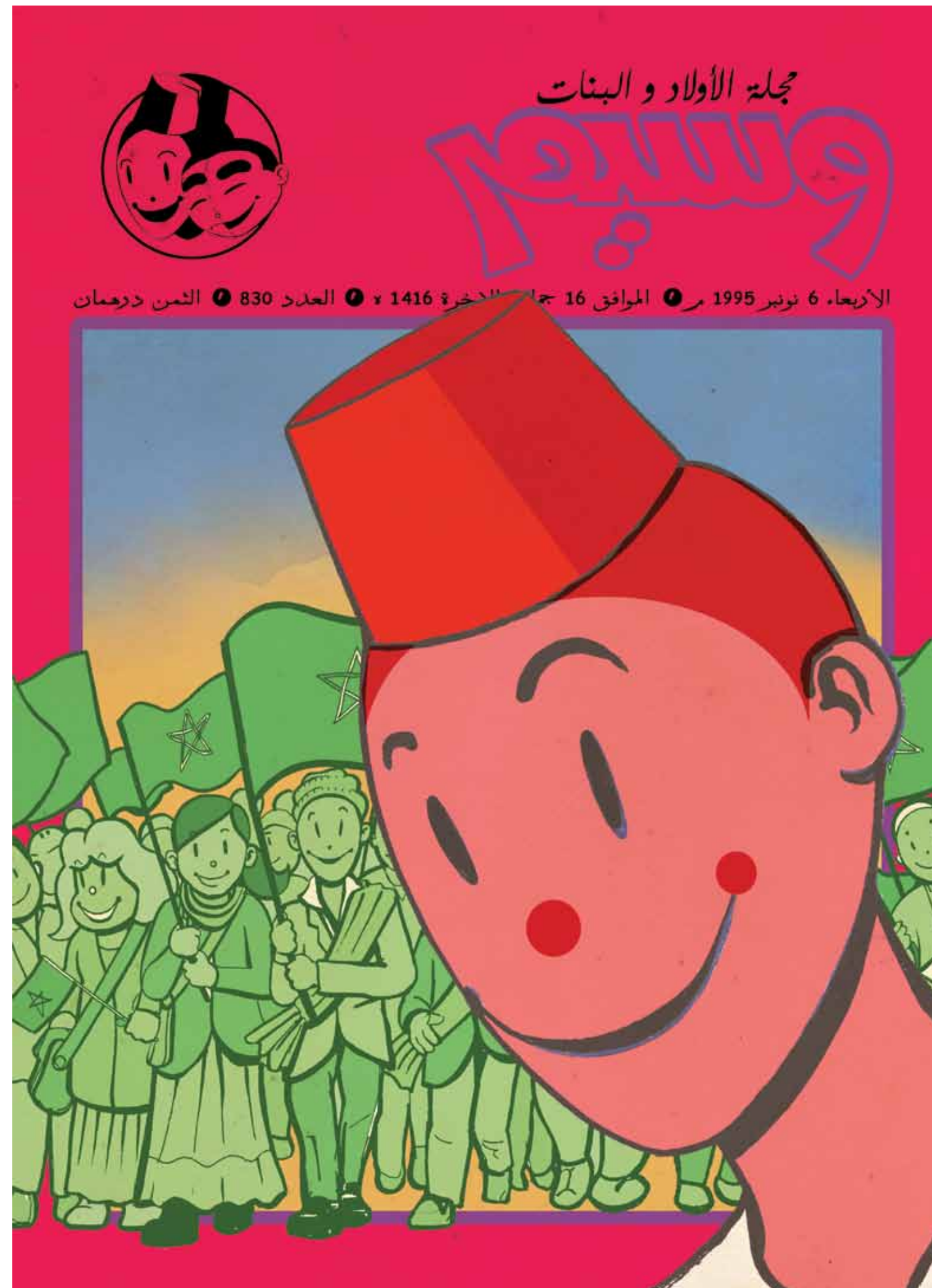
“You look triumphant! Who have you been with?”
“With the psychoanalyst.”
“Are you seeing him again?”
“No, now he comes to me.”

The flower drawings are found in the *Gay Flowers* comic strips published by Stefania Sala in the seventies in a magazine run by FUORI! (United Italian Revolutionary Homosexual Front). Used back then to disseminate, using humour, some of the ideas about gay liberation at the time, they are now part of *FIORI!*, another project by Francesc Ruiz that showed in Garcia Galería Madrid last year.

Ruiz reintroduces here the original comic strip and rhythmically repeats it along the paper, almost as if it were a musical variation, altering or replacing the texts contained in it with quotations by Italian philosopher Mario Mieli (1952–1983), a fundamental theorist of LGTB themes in the seventies, a founding member of FUORI! and author of *Elementi di Critica Omosessuale* (Homosexuality and Liberation: Elements of a Gay Critique, 1977).

“The discovery and the progressive liberation of the transsexuality of the subject will take us to the negation of the polarity between sexes and to the utopic achievement (in the revolutionary sense of the utopia eutopia) of the new man-woman that will be more probably woman-man.”

Mieli’s revolutionary thinking impregnates all the drawings and becomes their main protagonist. Within them, Ruiz reveals aspects of Mieli’s life and develops his ideas and theories, connecting alchemy, coprophagy and transsexuality.





Francesc Ruiz, *Gary*, 2013
installation with comics and photocopies

ALL IMAGES: Courtesy of Estrany-De la Mota Gallery

3.

Tintin, Donald Duck, Samir (a children's magazine character conceived by the Nasser regime) and Crushed Citizen (a skeletal and demoralised government drudge who appeared in the comic book *Flash* until it was banned by the Mubarak regime in the 1990s) walk together through the streets of present-day Cairo.

These are four of the main characters in the history of Egyptian comics and represent four important eras in the history of the country: Tintin symbolises the colonial past of Egypt; Donald Duck the American influence in the area; Samir, a middle-class child, the ideals of the 1952 Revolution and, finally, Crushed Citizen the decadence of the regime itself.

The characters are also the protagonists of *The Green Detour*, an Arabic-language photo novella produced by Francesc Ruiz in 2010 during a residency at the Contemporary Image Collective (CIC), Cairo. Each of its nine sequential episodes was available at a different distribution point throughout the pre-revolutionary city. Collating all of these was the only way to follow the entire story, which charts the adventures of the unlikely friends through the city and reveals the history of the comic in Egypt, as well as the political situation in the country at the time.

The scattered distribution of the project took the reader from one place to another, starting at the CIC and continuing to the French library, the Egyptian Museum, Tahrir Square and the American University before intersecting with presidential cars at the exit of the Parliament and perhaps with some of the demonstrations that took place there. Participants also uncovered some lost illustrators, went to the publishing house where Samir is published and to The Rooftop Studios, with views across the city, before taking a taxi to arrive in time for a puppet show and finally winding up at the second-hand books market.

The Green Detour was presented at the CIC in October 2010, three months before the start of the revolution. In many ways, the work reflected the pre-revolution situation of anxiety and discontent. And in other ways it anticipated the events to come.

4.

Mounted along a wall, thirty-two comic covers with a childish aesthetic and playful colours show different moments of Morocco's recent history as well as holidays and events from the official and religious calendars, from Ramadan to the celebration of pan-Arabism or the Green March. This is *Wasim*, a project produced by Francesc Ruiz in collaboration with Salah Malouli earlier this year and shown at MACBA Barcelona Contemporary Art Museum.

Morocco does not have much of a history of producing comics, but it's a place where comic books have been widely distributed and read, thanks to a French-Belgian presence from the north and a lesser known pan-Arabic influence from the east.

Wasim is a fiction about a hypothetical weekly comic book for children used as a propaganda tool to transmit values and the ideology of Hassan II regime to children, something not so different from Disney comics; but *Wasim* introduces us to new ways of understanding history and hegemonic narrations of history.

5.

Francesc Ruiz uses comic books as aesthetic, narrative and intellectual substrate, as well as historical and operational material. Through comics as a description of the real, he generates – by creation, alteration, restoration or assembly, among other possible pathways – stories that reveal the gears through which social and individual identities, sexual identity or even the identity of the city are constructed.

Ruiz understands the comic as a cultural material, one that, like cinema, allows us to realise a series of manipulations, montages and edits. A derivative comic can offer both meta-commentary on the original material and new alternative narratives. Ruiz's interest in pornographic comics is related to their capacity to connect in a very direct way with public desire, transferring it into a fantasy space and generating new narratives in which various subcultures can be made visible. His anomalous, alternative and damaged distribution models sometimes make use libraries or kiosks but also open distribution channels of indeterminate timing and location. Spaces of resistance, sometimes invisible, are created, and these are necessary for communication that is not threatened by repression and suppression.

The four projects outlined above belong to an important line of inquiry in Ruiz's practice, an ongoing investigation about the space generated by the comic exclusively from the South, a genre that escapes any nomenclature developed from the academic contexts that perpetuate Anglo-centric hegemonic research.

It seems urgent to make visible these genuine narratives from the South, so that they can connect with each other, push in non-conformist directions and propagate new ways of spreading knowledge away from the established, hegemonic modes of communication.

CLOUD METAL CITIES

Interview with Vanessa Safavi by Estelle Nabeyrat

In the run-up to her solo show in São Paulo, the Berlin-based artist discusses the cult of the body, silicone and sportswear

ESTELLE NABEYRAT: It begins with an image: a woman is standing, posing, back to the camera, her folded arms slightly raised. Only her torso is visible, not her legs, nor her head. She wears a short top made of aluminium and white jeans... I'd like to take this image as the starting point for our discussion of your upcoming show at Kunsthalle São Paulo. Before discussing the general composition and sense of this piece, though, I want to ask you about its main character, the aluminium clothing that you made for the photograph. How did you come up with this form and why did you decide to use this material?

VANESSA SAFAVI: Arriving in São Paulo struck me visually. It was as though I could finally understand the neo-concretism and abstraction period of 1950s Brazil by wandering through the city, taking in all the architecture that surrounded me. It was immediately apparent that I would bring up architectural elements and use building materials for the show in October. But I don't want to make a show that alludes to modernism or abstraction in a pure sense. I am more interested in how can I interpret this imprint of the modernist model today in a Brazil growing so quickly, overlaid by so many inputs, from a colonialist past to a new capitalism and global culture. So, to answer your question, I chose to work with aluminium because it conceptually evokes a building material and, at the same time, it has a very beautiful surface that reflects light and creates sort of psychedelic images. I learned from Marina, the director of the Kunsthalle, that the place was previously a bikini shop. Yes, that's how things are today. The traditions, the memories have all shifted. It's like in Berlin where people open galleries or bars in shop fronts, nail salons or any kind of available and affordable space. Most of these spaces were commercial surfaces. I decided then to design a fashion line of bikinis made out of aluminium; that was the starting point. The image comes from the shoot we did to announce the show.

EN: In this project, you are pushing the cultural resonances of materials into your work. And, in relation to that, I remember talking to you about Lygia Clark and her series of metal structures, such as *Bichos*, about her performative objects and experiences... In *Mythologiques: L'homme nu* (1971), Lévi-Strauss wrote, "The resemblance does not exist in itself: it is just a particular case of difference." I see in Clark's practice and in your own a de-ethnocentrisation process that I find particularly interesting in relation to a certain mode of art production today in Brazil that is largely ethnocentric. You both use industrial and natural materials and, more recently, you have been using silicone a lot. Silicone is a very sensual material that has almost skin-like properties, and it can be injected and placed inside the body. Are you are planning to exhibit some silicone pieces here too? Has the context of São Paulo influenced other aspects of the show?

VS: Yes, the idea of using the aluminium sheets in particular was also to evoke a sort of failed attempt to reproduce Lygia Clark's *Bichos*. "Failed" because they existed already in a context that doesn't resonate in the same way today and that, from another point of view, could even be perceived as ethnocentrist, with a sort of 'modernist melancholia'. I am much more interested in deconstructing and disturbing that belief, and the idea of de-ethnocentrisation is very much a concept I am close to, alongside the concept of de-territorialisation, of course.

Over the past years I have been working a lot with silicone, gums and all sorts of pliable materials. I have been focusing my research on the potential of silicone especially and its particular ability to

invite another possible interpretation within its original semantic. Its capacity to suggest the skin and the body as a 'connected envelope' interests me, in both a very physical and a conceptual sense.

Brazil's enthusiastic sense of the cult of the body and body transformation is another layer entirely to add to this work. I am very interested in how the body can be used as a tool in societies today.

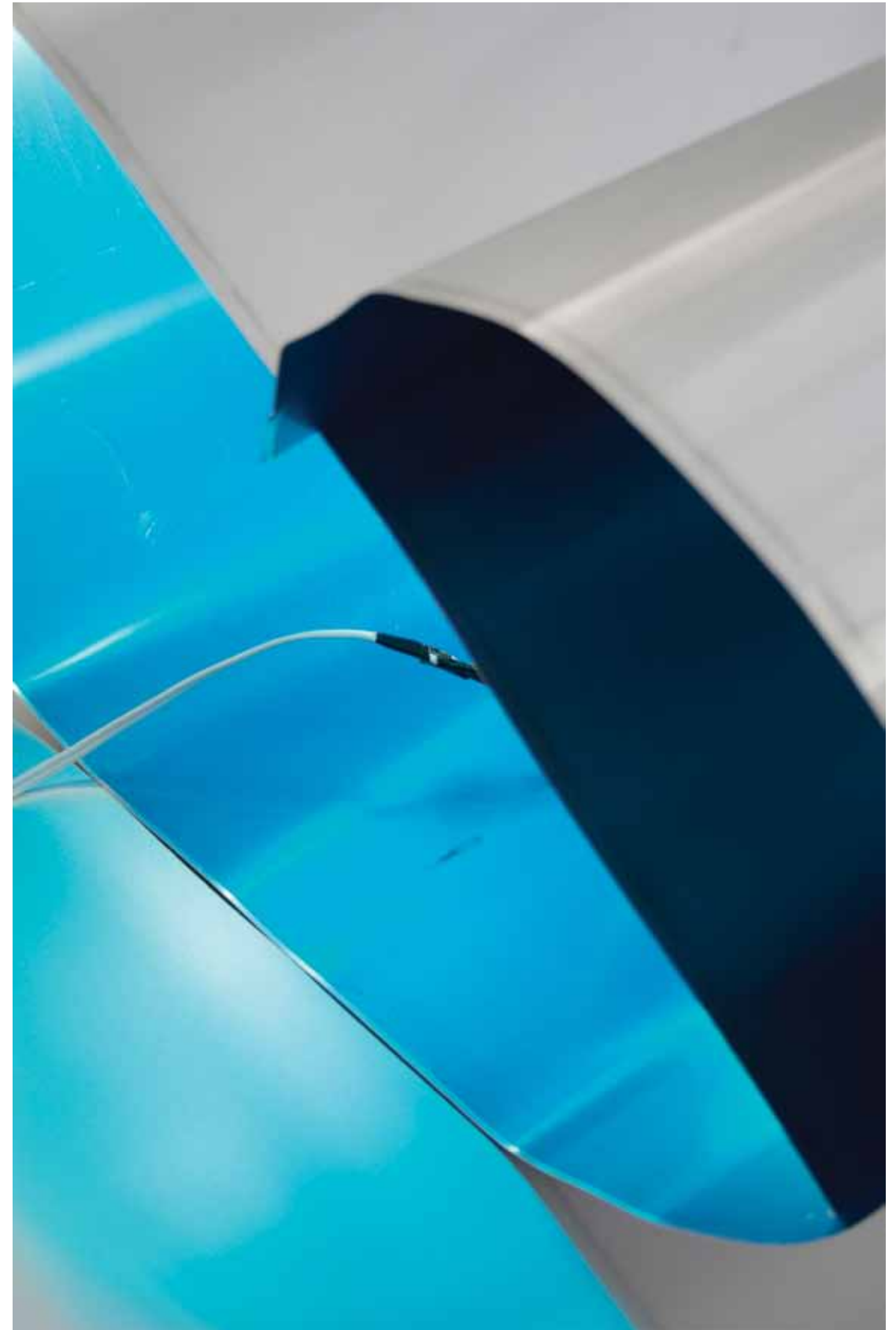
EN: The skin is a physical and conceptual territory very much explored throughout modern and contemporary Brazilian art history. Thinking about skin always reminds me of a costume designed by artist and architect Flávio de Carvalho. In 1956, he walked through the business district of São Paulo, dressed in his "new look", composed of a large skirt, a light top and sandals. It was thought to adapt the body to the tropical environment. The body has always been the space of natural and cultural investigations and discrepancies, and in that sense Brazil is no exception. What is more fascinating is probably how artists used this as a productive metaphorical gap. In Oiticica's *Parangolés* or in Marta Araújo's performances, for instance, showing is as important as hiding. Your silicone pieces could work as an allegory in this light. Although silicone is often used to transform the body's aesthetics (for women, men and transvestites), as far as I have seen, it is barely used by Brazilian artists, despite the growing discursivity around gender matters. It's as if the materiality removes the potential of representation from the subject. I wonder if this helps to explain in part the recent fetishisation of sportswear on YouTube videos viewed by gay communities in Europe.

VS: It's an interesting question, because the way people practice sport today definitely has to do with transformation and fetishisation. In gyms, for instance, people dress in iconic sports brands, and these enhance the beauty and the shapes of the body. This can very much be likened to latex and rubber fetishism, with far more connotations than just sexual ones. The high-tech, synthetic fabrics are able to envelop the body like a second skin, a hairless skin, and somehow offer the possibility to transcend it. It is probably relaxing to watch these YouTube videos, it is maybe a post-YouPorn thing, where sex is less obvious and visual and patterns are more important. It is obvious that people have the tools today to explore diverse and new forms of sexuality and fashions that evolve in contemporary and digital life spheres. It is a very good thing that we want to re-explore our bodies and our sexualities.

The silicone works are very much an allegory of the body's dualities, fears and transformations. Of course silicone also has a feminine and poetic aspect as well as being a very exciting material to work with. Furthermore, I am also interested in the idea that sportswear, with its 'smart' fabrics that wick sweat away from the body and dry quickly, is attempting in some way to colonise nature. This is one important aspect of the installation *Plenty of None* that I made in 2010 at Chert in Berlin. Sports clothes were spread across a surface of white sand. The work alluded to disappearance and this idea of the colonisation of nature.

EN: What is particularly interesting about the pieces you've mentioned is your way of circulating between identities and entry requirements. This circulation grants you a free zone around the authority of origin. In that sense, I have the feeling that we Europeans have a lot to learn from Latin America.

VS: I very much like the idea of a free zone or gaps. This constitutes the main basis for my research and interests. Exploring the gaps.



Vanessa Safavi, *Cloud Metal Cities* exhibition
installation view (detail)
Kunsthalle São Paulo, 2014
Courtesy of the artist

[ARCH]COMICOLOGIES: HOW TO CONSTRUCT A NARRATIVE

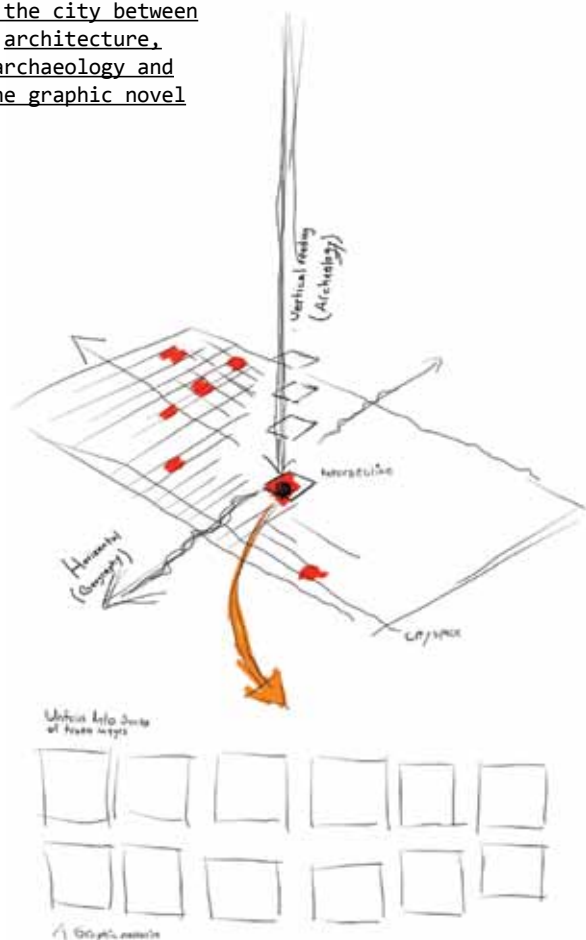
by Samir Harb

An archaeological reading of Ramallah's Mukataa allows us to chart political complexity and human behaviour through architecture



The Mukataa compound plan transformation, Palestinian Authority headquarters, Ramallah
From left to right: 2002, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011

The intersection in the city between architecture, archaeology and the graphic novel



AL-MUKATAA, A PATCH OF LAND that has been exhausted by periods of political epochs, tells the history of a long-lasting period of transformation. Passing through the main centre of the city of Ramallah, Palestine, it's impossible not to notice the newly constructed Palestinian Authority (PA) headquarters – new building, walls, security watchtowers, gates – surrounded by armed security guards.

I pass this site on daily basis, this symbol of power dominating the main street that connects the northern cities of the West Bank with the centre of Ramallah. Unjustifiably so, as the future state has not been established, but rather suspended, with an image of power that articulates the vision of the new Palestinian project of liberation. At this particular time, architecture plays an important role in constructing a narrative for the wider population. If the PA builds an architectural landmark in the middle of the city, it is to prove its emergence as a working state – and appearing to be a state becomes more important than how it actually functions.

Is this site material evidence of what produces the notion of freedom and independence championed in recent political agendas? What image has been constructed in the process? What is going on, what has been going on and what will happen next? And more importantly, how are our everyday lives articulated through such processes? These questions may not be answered by architecture, but architecture may enable an alternative dialogue.

In understanding this movement within the built environment, it is useful to consider the similarities between the practice of architecture and the making of a graphic novel. The buildings and the material flow of the city can be understood as objects in transition linked to a chain of events, be it political, economical, historical or environmental. And the graphic novel as a practice

may be defined as creating a series of frozen images, which – in this case – undo the stratification of a certain architectural building. What matters here is sequential: the development of the building becomes a story.

This is what I tend to call “[arch]comicoology”, the meeting point of (1) the vertical: material transformation accumulated within successive historical, political or economical events; (2) the horizontal: the way the materials have been distributed in relation to each other and within the geography of the city; and (3) the centre of the intersection, where the object that dismantles the narrative into a series of single events can be found. This dynamic, shifting centre is the space where everydayness happens.

Since its construction, for example, the Mukataa has been a power hub regulating the administrative and policing systems. It was established as part of the British colonial project to take control of the Palestinian territory. In fact, its clones – the so-called “Tegart forts” constructed by colonial police officer Sir Charles Tegart – were dotted across the territory of historical Palestine. These buildings functioned as structures to facilitate the counterinsurgency operation Tegart led against the rebellions and uprisings between 1936 and 1939. Generally the buildings were located on the main roads between cities; the Mukataa of Ramallah, for instance, was constructed on the road linking Jerusalem and Nablus.

Afterwards, the Mukataa became a locus of power used by the Jordanian (1948) and then the Israeli Administration (1967), and eventually the PA (1994). Through such intense change, the body of the Mukataa emerges as an archive of events, bringing together memories of defeat, capture, loss, freedom, hope, peace, death, life, continuity, torture, sovereignty and power in a single place.

A building or structure is a material formulation in time. Specifically, it is a sculpture depicting time and human behaviour. In

the case of the Mukataa, one structure can be seen to stand on the historical fault lines between successive eras. An archaeological reading of the material transformation of this particular building allows political complexity and spatial tectonics to be traced through the events that have taken place over time and have ultimately shaped the building.

With this historical understanding of the building in mind, I focus on three main stages in the production of a graphic novel: reading, re-ordering and juxtaposing. The reader who is *looking* at the graphic novel takes on the role of an archaeologist, piecing together a story one frame at a time. And the architecture of the city can be viewed as an archaeological site, a place to sift through the remnants of processes that have accumulated in layer after layer of material. Looking at the city as such allows a broader narrative of its landscape to unfold – one which is different than that produced by the power system.

However, what is important at this point is the outcome of these images. The process is very much akin to a photographer editing photographs after a shoot or an anthropologist going over notes after conducting fieldwork. Here the notions of re-ordering and juxtaposition come in. The making of comics becomes an essential tool to slow down and order the process of transformation into a meaningful sequence of fixed frames, to freeze each event into a single frame, be it a frame that the illustrator has chosen or one that is produced by the limits of the instrument he is using – a canvas, a piece of paper, or even a smartphone. This act in itself holds a matrix of images and moments of ‘becoming’: collapse, construction, erosion, dissolving, appearance and disappearance. And in this way, every building in the city can be seen as an archaeology of the death of political eras and the birth of new ones.

The first cycle was, Those who have been previously either activists or protesters in the first intifada ... Organizer of popular resistance activity... gathering groups on social level against the Israeli prevailing occupation. After the Oslo agreement many of them got recruited in the Palestinian Authority (PA) security apparatus.

After the second intifada ...

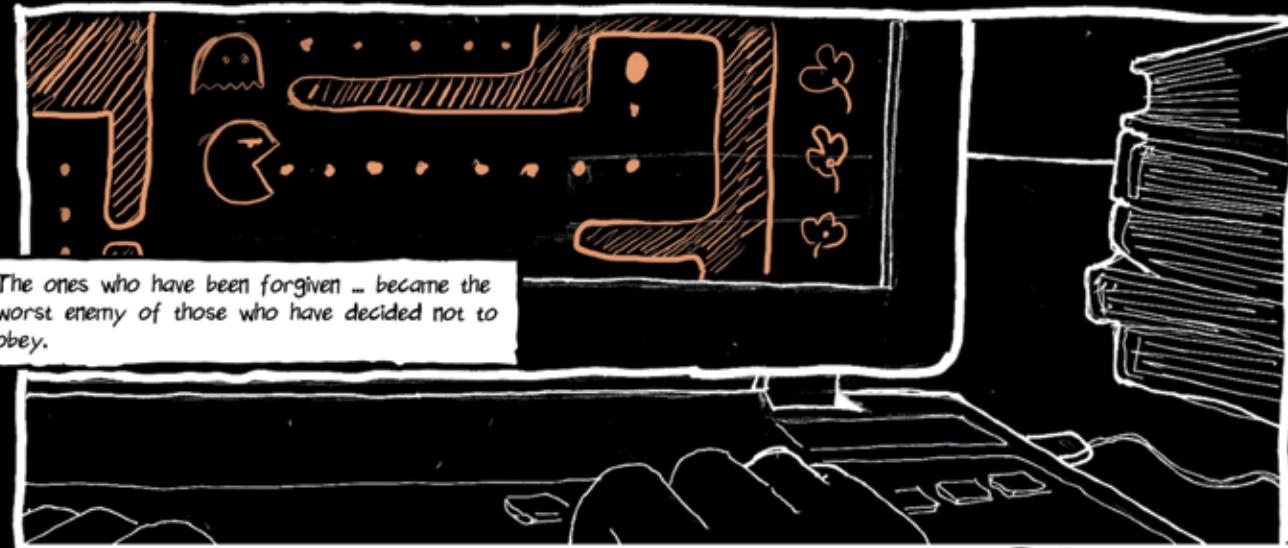
The first step was to dismantle all organization that have been affiliated to armed resistance. Second to recruit them in the PA security department.

The new security system that has been established after the project that kicked-off after the "war on terror"

For the PA to emerge again after being held back, the decision was to recruit the majority of the those militants, who contributed in the second intifada events, in the Palestinian Security apparatus. To establish the bases of a new era.

All those who were wanted by Israeli army and secret services where to be forgiven if they joined the PA security the final result was a sequence.

A deal has been done !

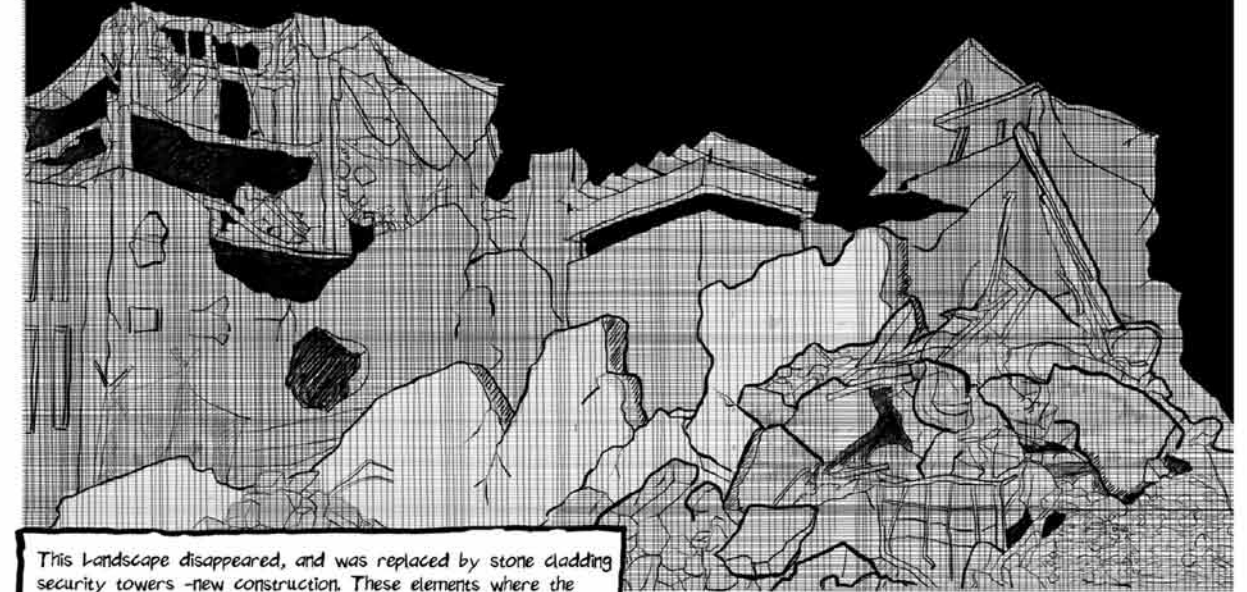


The ones who have been forgiven ... became the worst enemy of those who have decided not to obey.

Those who refused to be recruited where marked as the "unwanted" ... Listed to be eliminated.

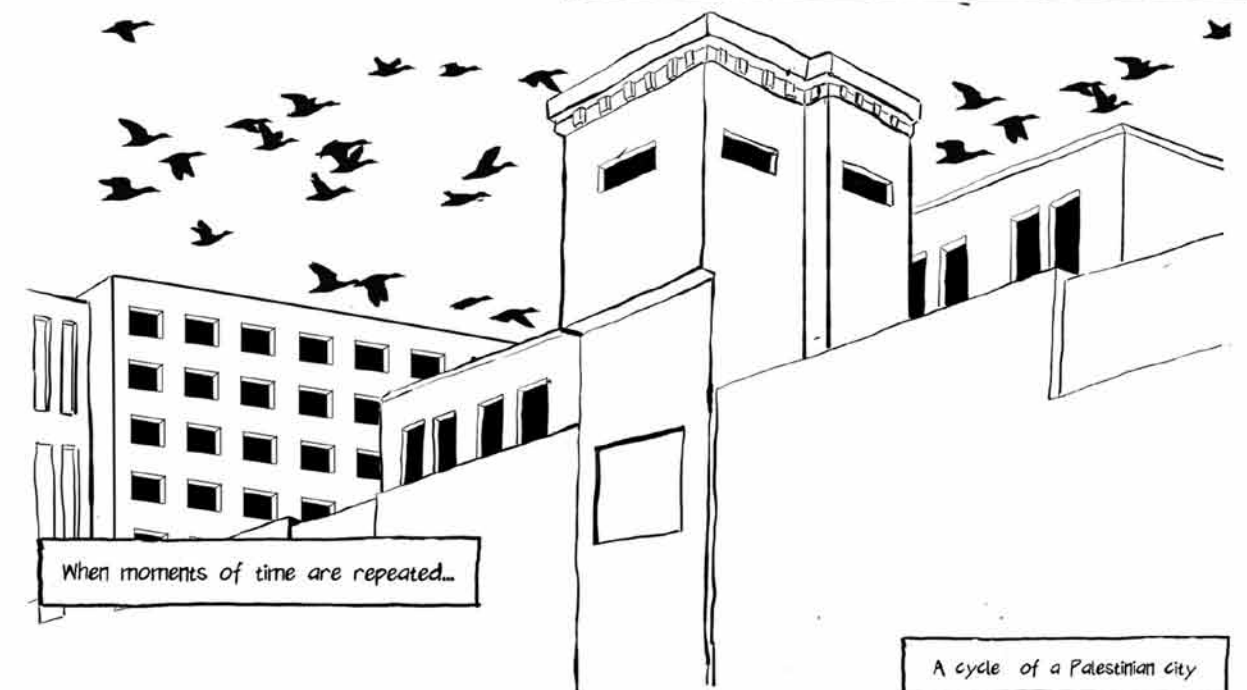
Either captured in prison or assassinated.

Destruction of scattered watchtowers on the corner of the fence of the Palestinian Authority compound, small rooms surrounded by ruins and rubble. It showed how this place was weak, wounded, and bleeding.



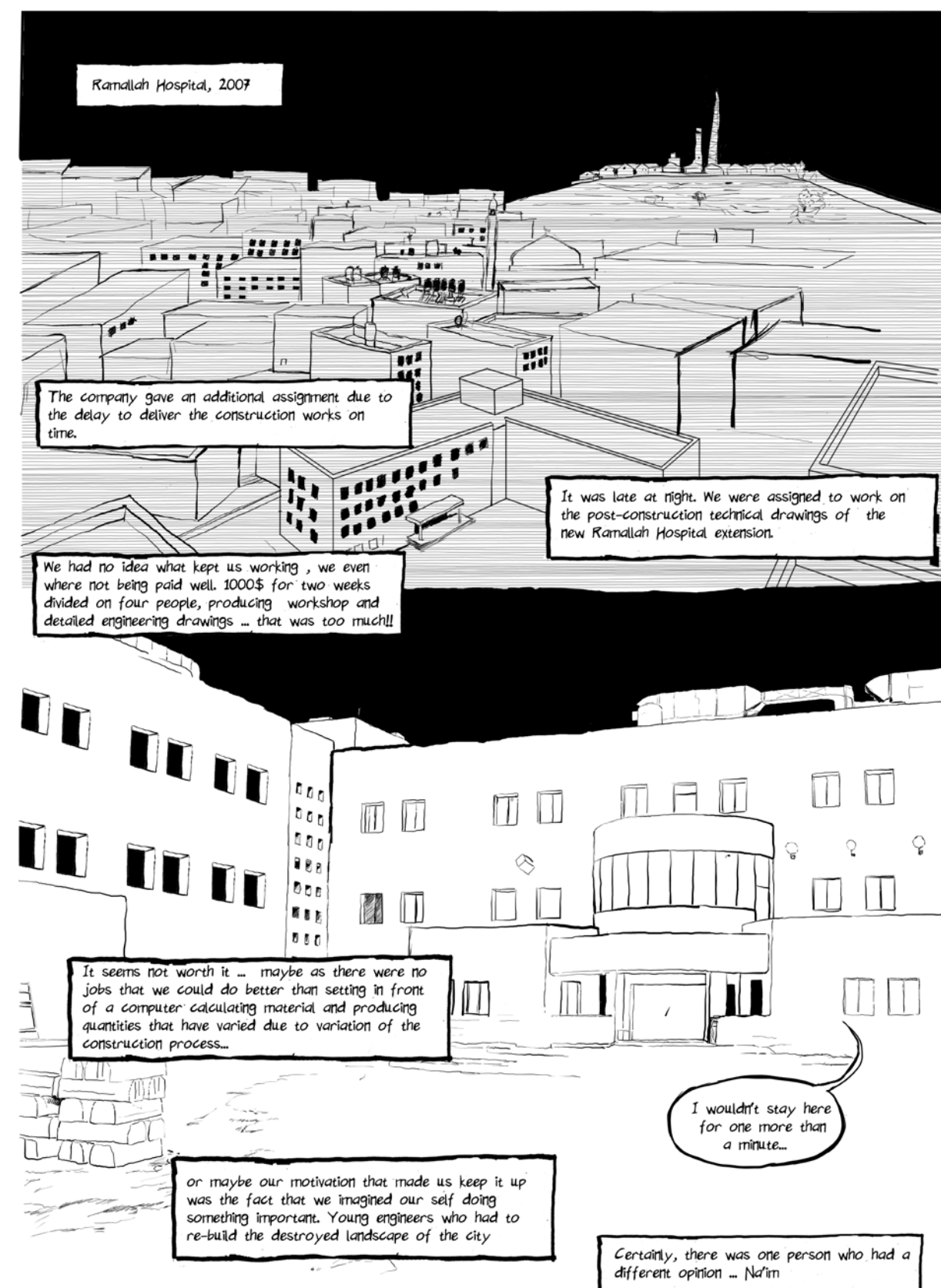
This landscape disappeared, and was replaced by stone cladding security towers -new construction. These elements where the architecture of a new era. They are marking the signs of the of completig a full cycle.

Exception and suspension does not mean stationness. It is rather an ecology a closed cycle that repeats it self- looping - designed tightly to bring the built environment in a condition that looks like frozen...



When moments of time are repeated...

A cycle of a Palestinian city



TOGETHER IN SOLITUDE

Interview with Jean-Baptiste Joly by Marina Fokidis

Accurately describing Akademie Schloss Solitude in the limited space of a magazine article is nearly impossible. It's a challenge to find the right words for an entity as perplex and as alive as this one, a place where art and education are the aim but knowledge is gained in the corridors, a place where chance encounters in the laundry room can not only change your life but, through professional networks that extend far beyond the Akademie, Stuttgart and even Germany, also alter the lives of others. Consult Wikipedia and you'll learn that Akademie Schloss Solitude is a residency. It is a public foundation subsidised by the state of Baden-Württemberg (one of the richest in Germany), and its main raison d'être is to support and promote mainly younger, gifted artists through residency fellowships. It also organises events and exhibits work by its residents.

Having lived at the Akademie for some time, I have to admit that the above description is very limited and is incapable of even beginning to give an impression of what exactly Solitude – as it is known by its residents – is. I feel lucky to have experienced this particular 'house' of art and culture where nothing is forced, where everything happens organically and where every tiny detail, as trivial as it may seem, becomes part of the entire 'lesson'. It is a place where binaries such as the public and the private, the collective and the individual collapse in favour of their direct beneficiaries – the residents, above all. I still do not fully understand how it functions so successfully. Internationalism, an interdisciplinary approach and openness to novelty are three notions mentioned in the same Wikipedia article that make much more sense. Yet even better are a few words taken from a long discussion we had with the brain, the heart, the soul, the head, the hands and the feet of Akademie Schloss Solitude – Jean-Baptiste Joly, its director.

MARINA FOKIDIS: Twenty-five years on, and Solitude is still so progressive...

JEAN-BAPTISTE JOLY: Starting a residency, back then, my main concern was not how to be progressive.

In a way it was simpler than that; it was like an equation.

An ancient building (the castle Solitude) with its own memory and status among the local population and a prime minister who, as a politician, wanted to have an institution for international cultural exchanges with the status of a foundation – generous and vague at the same time – that promoted artists, brought them all together and then went public with them. I took these elements and began with my own ignorance. After learning the parameters well, studying the place and looking at other (sometimes very boring) residencies, I decided to stop prevaricating and build within this very ignorance.

Above all, why should there be a residency here? I knew the answer to this first question already from my own background. I studied German history, culture and literature, and I did research with a collective in France in the seventies about the history of German emigration to France. Why did people move to France? They wanted to, or they were forced to, or there were political issues – they were Jewish, or there were economic and other political reasons, or they knew something bad was going to happen at that time in Germany.

Why should good artists decide to move from the place they live to come to Solitude? How could we get them to apply and be part of a selection system to enter into this?

Money was the first and obvious answer. We were in one of the richest states of Germany, after all. But money alone is not good enough. Many people would move for money, and not necessarily only the good ones. So we needed something else. Maybe we could entice them with the promise of being with other interesting people in a secluded place, but how could we prove that was the case? The place had no history and thus no reputation. Where to start?

MF: Multiple disciplines – is this what makes Akademie Schloss Solitude so particular?

JBJ: The thoughtful formation of the institution and the selection strategy of its people and the disciplines were an answer to the question of where to begin.

My main influence was the Collège de France, a higher education and research establishment in Paris that King Francis I, urged by Guillaume Budé, one of the first Hellenists, established as an alternative to the Sorbonne in the sixteenth century. At this college that still exists, well-known theorists, scientists and philosophers who are invited to join the faculty suggest the very name of their own discipline, give lectures open to anybody who wants to join them. There is neither a specific acceptance selection for this academy nor conferred degrees, only research laboratories and an excellent research library. Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and Marcel Mauss are among the famous professors who have taught there.

So the question of which disciplines our residency would accept, and why, was fundamental to determine how it would be shaped. The initial request included classical disciplines such as music, theatre, visual arts and literature, but there was no reason why film, architecture or design wouldn't also be included. And if these too, then why not others? Like a blind person who walks with both hands along the wall, we tried to put a logical start and an end to this question and then we arrived at one answer: we had to be open to all the disciplines.

But how do you define various disciplines, and how sustainable can they be in their definition over the years?

Taking the epistemological point of view that disciplines move and change along with history, again related to the ideas of the Collège de France, was another approach.

We entered into a dynamic game, with individual jurors, each with their own sense of understanding of categorisation, following the transformation of disciplines over the years. The

Bus stop
at Akademie Schloss
Solitude. Photo by
Marina Fokidis

Akademie invites a chair juror who is also responsible for inviting different jurors for each discipline, and he or she (at the moment it is the Swiss curator Corinne Diserens) has to ask whether the selection should be based on contradiction or not, on overlapping views or not. In a way, this solves the question of clear definition and division or interdisciplinarity. It is a very subjective act and a very private selection. Like inviting friends for dinner. Will these people fit together? Who will sit next to whom and why?

MF: Could you give us a short history of the chair jurors?

JBJ: The first one was a man called Johannes Cladders, a museum director in Mönchengladbach who brought the golden apple of modernity – people such as Carl Andre, Marcel Broodthaers, John Cage, Yves Klein and the Nouveaux Réalistes – to Germany and changed the history of contemporary art here. I was keen to invite someone who was twenty-five years older than me and from whom I could learn the written and unwritten history of the years before. Also, I predicted he would understand our mission, as he did. So the first years were based on very famous and excellent artists of the seventies who were our jurors and had a left-wing or even anarchic take on the notion of the institution.

Let me take the example of the selection process in visual arts: obviously, people like Dan Graham, Allan Sekula, Jeff Wall or Catherine David, who have all been serving as jurors for visual arts, have very different and fairly subjective understandings of the most recent history of art. In this regard, a turning point was Jeff Wall, who brought another genealogy of artists that put an end to the post-Fluxus minimal and conceptual tradition. Somehow the terrorism of simplicity that was leading the arts until then, and was of course a power mechanism, was coming to an end. Catherine David, who took over as our juror for visual arts in 2000, saw one world with many different options that corresponded to each other and thus identified the complexity of different art scenes. This was obvious in her documenta 10. We were close to her and her team, and she worked with fellows on creating publications and parts of the programme. Some of the fellows took part in that documenta 10, but this was before she became our juror.

MF: Tell me more about the content and focal points of Solitude's research.

JBJ: Our main focal points change periodically. It is mandatory for fellows in the scientific and economic disciplines to follow these focal areas for research, but not for the fellows in the arts. We still feel that the traditional artistic disciplines such as visual arts, music, literature, theatre or architecture should be freer from constraints. “Dealing with Fear”, “Design of the Inhuman” and “Chronicles of Work” are a few of the subjects to which we have dedicated our research in the last six or seven years. Around 2000, we anticipated quite strong activist and anti-globalisation movements. These became popular topics for fellows' presentations and internal discussions. By that time, a strong network of former fellows had been established, and they seemed to be working well together outside the Akademie. Around that time, we decided to open up our disciplines into more concrete science and economic areas.

The questions that artists and art professionals have are also questions other sectors such as the pharmacy industry or businesses are asking themselves. But the various parties don't know that. So we decided to create a shortcut to bring all these people together. It has worked well so far, perhaps differently to what we had imagined, but we still have a way to go because we are exploring unknown territory.

MF: Beyond a residency, perhaps this is an ideal proposal for an arts academy?

JBJ: What we are doing is much easier than offering the basic knowledge needed in the first years of becoming an artist. In those initial years, there is a double-bind in education: freedom claimed by the establishment is what should prompt you to invent yourself

everyday but certain canonical knowledge might be needed to become an artist. This is a tough balancing act.

We come in after these first years, and, through a very selective process of around 1,800 applications from over a hundred countries, we accept about 70 people every two years to whom we give full trust and support.

Once here, there is no questioning of who they are or if what they are doing is good or bad.

We help them confront themselves. Then they also begin discovering the other fellows, but in a very different situation to other similar institutions. Here the relations are based on what is called in psychoanalysis the ‘emphatic relationship’. The fellows create liaisons through likeness and sympathy before knowing what everyone is doing. They meet in an informal grey zone of relations before they confront each other in a more official work forum. This abolishes the competition found in other systems where fellows have to prove from the start that they are better than the rest or where they simply don't care about each other.

Here, the methodology is respect and friendship before professional exchange: this is our proposal on how one can enter into difference. You could say that Akademie Schloss Solitude is a (mostly uncontrolled) laboratory of various kinds of relationships between the art and the art world and that from this spectrum of exchanges a concrete proposal might emerge. One that will beat the patterns of cultural creation and consumption in the art world as we know them now.

WE SHALL SOMETIME COME TO SOMEPLACE

by Claudia Gehre and Clara Herrmann

A glimpse into life at Akademie Schloss Solitude – exhibition space, meeting place and retreat

“Awaiting without horizon of the wait, awaiting what one does not expect yet or any longer, hospitality without reserve, welcoming salutation accorded in advance to the absolute surprise of the arrivant from whom or from which one will not ask anything in return and who or which will not be asked to commit to the domestic contracts of any welcoming power (family, State, nation, territory, native soil or blood, language, culture in general, even humanity), just opening which renounces any right to property, any right in general, messianic opening to what is coming, that is, to the event, that cannot be awaited as such, or recognized in advance therefore, to the event as the foreigner itself, to her or to him for whom one must leave an empty place; always; in memory of the hope—and this is the very place of spectrality.”

– JACQUES DERRIDA, *Specters of Marx*

CHAPTER 1 Arrival

The Schloss... We go back in time, right to the very first day, the very first chapter of the Solitude story. It begins again and again, a never-ending cycle, with the next fellows arriving this month or next month, next year or in ten years, stepping out of the city bus, crossing the square in front of the rocaille castle, ringing the bell at Haus 3, finally putting a face to the voice on the phone or the emails sent about visa applications or travel arrangements... Great expectations.

CHAPTER 2 Orientation/Synchronisation

Entering the Solitude universe means one foot under the breakfast table and one foot in art. It's a limbo between everyday life and work, the public and the private – best typified by the sight of an overtired fellow in a bathrobe lost in thought, falling out of his studio right into an exhibition space, mumbling “hi” on the way to grab a coffee at the cafeteria, passing by a Chinese delegation being shown around the building by the director. The Schloss is many places: hotel, office, exhibition space, playground, think tank and bar, all at the same time. *Unlike scenes*. Loose orientation leads to synchronisation, following the inner logic of the place, adapting to the rhythm, thinking *Across the Grid*, always a step ahead of the next smart

encounter with your future curator, actor in your next movie, someone who writes music for you... or falls in love with you. Whatever the case, you feel as though you are incredibly well placed.

CHAPTER 3 Consolidation

After being thrown into this universe, it takes a while to see things clearly again. You are navigating the different components of Solitude: the space, the staff, the other fellows – you place yourself in this intersection, within *Decided Indecisiveness*. The next thing to figure out is how your (artistic) practice fits into the circumstances, how you contextualise it – within the institutional frame, next to it or even in opposition to it. What kind of fellow are you? There is no *good* or *bad* fellow. There are loud fellows, lovely fellows, sociable fellows, those who never attend any events, those who come to all of them, busy fellows, fellows who ease friction (like us), demanding fellows – regardless, you'll be remembered when you leave. Some stories become Solitude classics and are passed on through the years, or may even have reached your ears before your time at the Akademie. You might already have heard about the boar attack in the forest or the spontaneous marriage proposal on the bus.

Are you feeling settled now?



Akademie Schloss Solitude. Photo by Rudolf Koc a

CHAPTER 4 Solitude

You are living in an epic place, a summer residency on top of a hill with a beautiful view down to Weil im Dorf. There are horses in the fields, a vast forest behind you, tree-lined avenues and generously laid-out historic parks with greenery from all over the world. Almost everybody refers to Akademie Schloss Solitude as “the Schloss”, though the castle itself almost fades into invisibility in day-to-day life. At weekends, however, things are different up here. Even a hopeless romantic might feel disillusioned by the wedding factory as yet another bridal couple ascends the curved flight of stairs. Luckily most of the tourists remain at the front of the castle instead of in the yard surrounding the gentleman’s houses – our backyard. After hours, when the administrative staff go home, the Schloss belongs to the fellows. Time for some ‘schlossiness’. *As Good as Gold.*

Once the feeling of displacement is gone and you get used to the scenery and the surrounding beauty, you’ve become a regular. Your solitude up here might be highly productive, but you could also get lost. And the other things going on in your personal life don’t simply stop when you’re at Solitude, which makes this place just as central as it is remote.

CHAPTER 5 Third Place

One might call Solitude a “third place”, as Oldenburg describes it in *The Great Good Place*, a home away from home. Here, people who would not otherwise have met are brought together. At lunch, you might sit next to a Finnish professor of economics talking about his counter-investment cooperative and an algorithm named “Parasyte”. Or an artist from Slovakia who builds furniture designed by an architect who never existed. Or a writer who offers you a whisky to celebrate completing the last page of his book. Or you might listen to a computer scientist and his dreams about data. But you’ll never see a chess player – they’re always training, though they might give you an insight into the workings of their mind at the next internal presentation.

What is real? Reality is a place where no one wants to go. In this third place, the mood is playful, with largely unplanned activities as an escape from routines, a place to find new routines in a community shaped by the shared experience of this

exceptionally strange and quaint situation. And once you have been to the playground, you become part of the game, you form a bond with the place and even with future players. And then you want to recreate these moments, and you feel an urge to return... This is the driving force of this special community network – even more tangible after the actual time spent at the place. *Future Scenarios with an Open End.*

CHAPTER 6 Production

What are we producing? Although production is not a primary goal at first sight, fellows are of course productive: writing texts, publishing books, finishing doctoral theses, rehearsing dance performances, traversing creative deserts, sharing and swapping skills, planting a herb garden, jogging, bartending, experimenting, dealing with bread-and-butter jobs. Something often arises out of nowhere, simply because interesting people are brought close together and given time. And this time is precious. As coordinating fellows, we are challenged to open up and manage the incredible potential of the fellows alongside other tasks and responsibilities. It’s inspiring to see how a chance meeting between a musician and a computer scientist, for instance, can lead to synchronised creative processes and on to a joint piece and *Mapping the Space* together.

CHAPTER 7 Epilogue

(An exchange from the fellows email list)
Fellow 1: Did anyone take the lovely iron from the *Waschsalon*? If so, please return it – I can’t deal with the shitty one that’s there.
Fellow 2: My bad. I was making grilled cheese sandwiches with it last night. I’m soaking the iron in water right now to get the stink off.
Fellow 1: Ok, see I was wondering if I should add a “PS: Fuck off” line to my email exclusively for you, my friend, but I decided not to. I will say, though, that the day a hot iron ever leads your hand over one of those wrinkly shirts of yours, you’ll understand the desperation of this email.
Fellow 2: I now know where I went wrong: I forgot the aluminium foil!
Fellow 3: Please never take me off the fellows list.

The italicised titles throughout the text are names of exhibitions and projects that have taken place at or with the cooperation of Akademie Schloss Solitude.



Precarity Pilot workshop, Lecce 2014. Images by Brave New Alps

Questions on the Transformation of Design Work... from the South of the Alps, the North of Italy and Other Ambiguous Locations

by Brave New Alps

How to produce meaningful, socially engaged work as a designer while still making ends meet? How to do so while living in a place going through a socio-economic crisis with no end in sight? Is it, as is generally suggested, by following the neoliberal doctrine of being as competitive and commercially oriented as possible? And if so, how to live with the schizophrenia of supporting (less than part-time) with one hand what the other contributes (full-time) to dismantle? Isn't it actually an unviable paradox to produce socially engaged work, while remaining shackled to the ambition of being successful in conventional terms?

In today's world, we're constantly told that people in the global North are more successful than those in the global South, that men are more successful than women, bankers are more successful than designers, designers are more successful than cleaners, cleaners are more successful than the unemployed, etcetera, etcetera. This logic of competition keeps us in check, because being labelled – in different forms – as “unsuccessful” within the current system means having no say, thereby being marginalised and precarised even further. This dynamic necessarily produces few winners and many losers, and this in turn means that aiming to be successful in order to have the time and space to address issues of injustice and inequality does not hold as a strategy. In many ways it's this dynamic in the first place that produces the situation we would like to change.

Once this paradox becomes apparent, so too does the necessity to politicise one's ways of working, organising and living so that the contribution to the emergence of a just yet diverse world does not remain entrusted to the content of one's work. Rather, it should already be enacted in the work's processes of production. The desire to produce meaningful design then becomes not just about addressing social issues and controversies, but about contributing to social transformation. How to politicise en masse, then, not only the content, but also the ways of producing and living, when every time socially engaged designers ask for advice on how to make a living while combining their skills and desires, they're led down the conventional path of entrepreneurialism, self-management and competition?

To grapple with these questions – which have come up in our own and in many of our peers' practices – we've initiated together with the illustrator and pedagogist Caterina Giuliani the project *Precarity Pilot*, which functions as a “subversive career service”. It consists of a series of nomadic workshops and an online platform that act as places in which to collectively explore ways of working, organising and living that exceed conventional discourse within the creative industries. Following the feminist spirit of taking sides in order to transform existing power relations and ways of doing, with *Precarity Pilot* we bring people together to co-produce knowledge about socio-economic assemblages that can defy multiple forms of precarisation. In so doing, we aim to make space for transformative design practices not via competition but through mutuality.

Manifest prosperity*

- do what you desire
- develop a low-cost practice
- work towards the collective management of basic material resources
- experiment with notions of collectivity and efficiency
- create virtuous and sustainable cycles, both in work and life
- put care into relations with others
- re-invent rules and words
- embrace a perpetual becoming
- have the courage to end an experiment (and to restart it)
- take a position and act from it
- matter to whomever matters to you
- self-define objectives, priorities, needs and desires
- continue to question what you do and think
- exit the conventional circuits of design

* This manifesto is a translated and edited version of the desires that were discussed during a *Precarity Pilot* workshop in Lecce (Southern Italy) in July 2014. The workshop was part of *Do it Together – Participation through art, design and architecture*, a free summer school organised by Make People Do.



Drawings from *Precarity Pilot* workshop, Lecce 2014. Images by Caterina Giuliani, Cartaelatte, Gabriele Trove, Francesco Poli

ATHENS GALLERIES AND INSTITUTIONS

3 137 artist run space

www.3137.gr
T: +30 213026 14 36 info@3137.gr
Babylon Radio temporary radio network
by Daniel Kemeny, Chrysanthi Koumianaki,
Kosmas Nikolaou, Andreas Sell, Paky
Vlassopoulou as part of the project
New Babylon Revisited curated by Sofia Dona
and Daphne Dragona)
(6–9 November 2014)
For more information, contact 3 137.

A.D. Alpha Delta Gallery

www.adgallery.gr
T: +30 2103228785 ad@otenet.gr
Yiannis Theodoropoulos (solo show)
(24 September – 8 November 2014)
For more information, contact
A.D. Alpha Delta Gallery.

Artower Agora

www.artower.gr
T: +30 2103246100 artower@otenet.gr
For more information, contact Artower Agora.

Atopos Contemporary Visual Culture

www.atopos.gr
T: +30 2108838151 info@atopos.gr
Atopos Unlocked
(29 October 2014 – 31 May 2015)
Atopos Unlocked # David Marinos
(October – November 2014)
Atopos Unlocked # Clo'e Floirat
(December 2014 – January 2015)
For more information, contact Atopos cvc.

Bernier / Eliades

www.bernier-eliades.gr
T: +30 2103413936, +30 2103413937
bernier@bernier-eliades.gr
Group show
(2 October – 13 November 2014)
Christiane Löhr
(20 November 2014 – 8 January 8, 2015)
Entang Wiharso
(15 January – 26 February, 2015)
Robert Wilson
(9 March – 7 May, 2015)
For more information, contact
Bernier / Eliades.

Ekfrasi – Yianna Grammatopoulou

www.ekfrasi-art.gr
T: +30 2103607598 info@ekfrasi-art.gr
Polymorfies III (group exhibition)
(23 October – 8 November 2014)
Periclis Goulakos (painting)
(13 November – 13 December 2014)
“Like” (group exhibition
curated by Angelos Skourtis)
(13 December 2014 – 10 January 2015)
Juliano Kaglis (painting)
(15 January – 14 February 2015)
For more information, contact
Ekfrasi – Yianna Grammatopoulou.

Eleftheria Tseliou Gallery

www.tseliougallery.com
T: +30 2103618188 info@tseliougallery.com
For more information, contact
Eleftheria Tseliou Gallery.

Eleni Koroneou Gallery

www.koroneougallery.com
T: +30 2103411748 info@koroneougallery.com
Alex Hubbard – Jon Pestoni
(26 September – 26 November 2014)
For more information, contact
Eleni Koroneou Gallery.

Elika

www.elikagallery.com
T: +30 2103618045 welcome@elikagallery.com
Artissima International Fair of Contemporary
Art, Turin (participating artists: Dimitris
Ameladiotis, Zoe Giabouldaki, Kostas
Roussakis, Myrto Xanthopoulou)
(7 –9 November 2014)
Vangelis Gokas
(November – December 2014)
Group show
(January – February 2015)
Pantelis Chandris
(March 2015)
Theodoros Zafeiropoulos
(April – May 2015)
For more information, contact Elika.

Gagosian Gallery

www.gagosian.com
T: +30 2103640215 athens@gagosian.com
Horror Vacui (William Anastasi, Urs Fischer,
Damien Hirst, John Houck, Bruce Nauman,
Roman Opalka, Richard Phillips, Nancy Rubins,
Despina Stokou, Piotr Ukiński, Rachel
Whiteread, Richard Wright)
(30 October – 20 December 2014)
For more information, contact Gagosian Gallery.

Gallery Genesis

www.gallerygenesisathens.com
T.: +30 2117100566 g.tzaneris@gmail.com
Bodil Hedlund & Mikael Kihlman (paintings)
(23 October – 15 November 2014)
Timos Batinakis (drawings)
(20 November – 13 December 2014)
Collectif d' artistes Simio (group exhibition)
(16 December 2014 – 11 January 2015)
Markos Blatsios (paintings)
(15 January – 7 February 2015)
For more information, contact Gallery Genesis.

Ileana Tounta Contemporary Art Center

www.art-tounta.gr
T: +30 2106439466 ileanatounta@art-tounta.gr
Dimitrios Antonitsis, Ioanna Pantazopoulou,
Lost & Found, Soul Substitutes II
(2 October – 15 November 2014)
For more information, contact Ileana Tounta
Contemporary Art Center.

Kalfayan Galleries

www.kalfayangalleries.com
T: +30 2107217679 info@kalfayangalleries.com
Maria Loizidou *Cropping Up* (solo show)
(7 October – 15 November 2014)
Emmanouil Bitsakis (solo show)
(November – December 2014)
Adrian Paci (solo show)
(December 2014 – January 2015)
For more information, contact
Kalfayan Galleries.

Medusa Art Gallery

www.medusaartgallery.com
T: +30 2107244552 medusa9@otenet.gr
For more information, contact
Medusa Art Gallery.

metamatictaf

www.metamatictaf.gr
T: +30 2103238757 info@metamatictaf.gr
Refute It group show
(23 October – 15 November 2014)
Nulla Dies Sine Linea/ Not A Day Without a Line
(Evripidis Papadopetrakis, Pantazis Tselios,
Miltiadis Petalas, Christos Velissaris, Fotis
Varthis, Giannis Sotiriou, Mary Polidorou)
(20 November – 14 December 2014)

Shoegazing the City (Dimitris Athinakis a.k.a.
Latenighter, Angeliki Zervou a.k.a. Sublolita)
(20 November – 14 December 2014)
Studios 2013
(18 December 2014 – 18 January 2015)
For more information, contact metamatic:taf.

Openshowstudio project space

www.openshowstudio.gr
T: +30 6977977126 os@openshowstudio.gr
YOUTH ELIXIR 4ALL Cultural Management
Courses – *youthelixir4all.open@tumblr.com*
(ongoing project)
For more information, contact
Openshowstudio project space.

Peritechnon Karteris

www.peritechnon.com
T: +30 2108239465 peritechnon@yahoo.gr
George Giotsas (solo show)
(21 October – 15 November 2014)
For more information, contact
Peritechnon Karteris.

Rebecca Camhi

www.rebeccacamhi.com
T: +30 2105233049 gallery@rebeccacamhi.com
Photography by Nan Goldin, Roni Horn,
DeAnna Maganias, Catherine Opie, Ugo
Rondinone, Wolfgang Tillmans
(November – December 2014)
Morris Ganis (solo show)
(February – April 2015)
For more information, contact
Rebecca Camhi.

State of Concept

www.stateofconcept.org
T: +30 2130318576 info@stateofconcept.org
Keren Cyttter *Video Art Manual*
(12 September – 15 November 2014)
Panda Sex (Andreas Angelidakis, Alikei
Panagiotopoulou, Ronald Cornelissen, Keith
Farquhar, Brian Griffiths, Sophie Jung, Scott
King, Natalia LL, Philomene Pirecki, Mary
Ramsden, Adam Thirlwell, Alexander Tovborg)
(29 November 2014 – 17 January 2015)
For more information, contact State of Concept.

The Breeder

www.thebreedersystem.com
T: +30 2103317527
gallery@thebreedersystem.com
For more information, contact
The Breeder, Athens.

The George Economou Collection

www.thegeorgeeconomoucollection.com
T: +30 8090519–563
info@economoucollection.com
Thorn in the Flesh
(11 September 2014 – May 2015)
For more information, contact
The George Economou Collection.

Zoumboulakis Galleries

www.zoumboulakis.gr
T: +30 2103608278 galleries@zoumboulakis.gr
Giorgos Gyparakis *Froglessness* solo show
(23 October 2014 – 15 November 2014)
Underground Island – 18 artists for Dionysus
Savvopoulos group show
(19 November – 6 December 2014)
Art & Design
(18 December 2014 – 10 January 2015)
Io Angeli *On Limits* solo show
(12 February – 14 March 2015)
For more information, contact
Zoumboulakis Galleries.

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VLASSIS CANIARIS (1928-2011): AN OPPOSITIONIST AND A GENTLEMAN

Caniaris was, in many ways, a political artist; however, he repudiated the label 'partisan'. He did not feel like a sworn bearer of social messages to awaken the people. Indeed, he always aimed for honesty, consistency and freedom rather than heeding a set ideology. "I don't believe that art can change things. I lived in times when the circumstances themselves made me be 'anti'. For most of my life there was ample scope for my being 'anti'. Opposition is in art's very nature; this cannot change, even if the trend today is towards the apolitical." He chose to be a realist about his environment, acknowledging the precarious way in which art operates. He recognised the laws of the market and sought professionalism in all those involved. He also demanded a similar professionalism and seriousness from critics, who he felt ought to be able to get to the heart of his works and be bold enough to comment on the essence instead of stopping at mere descriptions.

Caniaris spent many years as an intellectual émigré away from his native land, and this distancing gave him better insight. "By leaving Greece in 1975 I broke out of an artistic and social corral. I left to escape the suffocating political aura of the time. In this sense, that breathing space made fleeing worthwhile. Other than that, those of us who left were perhaps more egoistic, more ambitious... We lagged too far behind Europe. In fact we may have been a little crazy, oblivious to the magnitude of the undertaking. Nevertheless, we fought on an equal footing." Caniaris remained Greek, even if the sense of belonging to a country he left behind for so long was quite unthinkable. "I cannot feel integrated," he admitted. "When we were leaving back then, coming back was not an objective." Yet Caniaris did return, and, when he did, Greece was ready to receive him. A lot has changed since that 1958 show at Zygos Gallery, when abstraction in painting loomed like an aesthetic miasma. As usual, of course, his reception had to be preceded by the appreciation of his work by major European museums.

"The way I understand this general mobilisation of artists, galleries and museums is that even if not every show or other event has a reason to be, it still generates broader interest. The artworks, even when they are innocuous, essentially address the masses and are easier to assimilate. I see in this an attempt to approach the audience, and it makes me optimistic about contemporary art and the new things. I am not so much interested in the 'artwork' itself; I am much more interested in the possibility afforded to someone to see it again and again and ultimately to appropriate it. This is why I am optimistic about what is described as 'mayhem'. True, once you remove some of these works from their context they are no longer treated as art – but I don't think this is necessarily bad. It becomes something else; a possession, which retains its ideas and gets appropriated by more people."

Caniaris also wondered about the place of art, its usefulness or uselessness. He avoided the arrogance of the creator who believes they have approached divinity every time they complete a work. "I am more concerned about all those billions of people who live without the slightest interest in art the way we usually define it. Yet they still have their life, good or bad... Art is not something you learn and incorporate into your life. It's not a foreign language. Art is a tool, an everyday utility. So all those supposedly initiated people may in fact have nothing. This is why I am more interested in the others, the many who cannot see art as a catalyst. Perhaps we should go back to the concept itself and redefine it."

This is an excerpt from an article by Afroditi Panagiotakou originally published in Highlights (no. 13, November/December 2004, pp. 70-73).



Vlassis Caniaris, Kunstverein Hannover, 1976
Courtesy of the Estate of the artist and Kalfayan Galleries, Athens/Thessaloniki
Exhibition catalogue Vlassis Caniaris, Arrivederci – Willkommen – 1976, Kalfayan Galleries, Athens, 2009, p. 18

tradition

VLASSIS CANIARIS: *ARRIVEDERCI – WILLKOMMEN*

by Christoforos Marinos

Emigration and the Greek economy:
why Caniaris's 1976 installation still
resonates today

An article in the *Financial Times* on 7 May 2008 outlined a bleak image of the future of the Greek economy. The writers of the article forecast “a sharp slowdown [which] could result in an exodus of Greek workers to western Europe for the first time since the 1960s”.¹ Although the competent minister of economy and finance swiftly denied the news, declaring that it was unfounded,² the article provided Greek journalists with the opportunity to verify the matter on the basis of certain recent opinion polls.³ According to the polls, the worrying scenario was not far from the truth, and widespread pessimism, increasing economic recession and high levels of unemployment brought back memories that had been deeply buried in the Greek consciousness over the past decades. (And until then the younger generation's only contact with migration had been through tear-jerker Greek films or popular songs.) But no matter how well-founded the relevant warnings that emerged from the research, there was a marked difference with the past: “We are not speaking of the migration that the Greeks experienced during the sixties, when thousands of unskilled workers left for the factories of Europe,” noted journalist Nikos Konstantaras. “The situation today is more akin to the phenomenon of bright students who do not return home after their studies.”⁴ In other words, the spectre of migration continues to haunt Greece. Only this time, the *Gastarbeiter* of the sixties and seventies have been replaced by workers with a high level of education wanting to return to their country after a time living abroad, particularly in the European Union.

Vlassis Caniaris's installation, *Arrivederci – Willkommen* –1976, presented in 2009 for the first time in Greece, prompts us to consider the issue of migration in the nation's contemporary history. To approach a historical artwork of this kind, it is key to keep in mind not only the morphological elements of the work but also the artist's own interpretation of the historical and sociological context in which it was created.

The installation *Arrivederci – Willkommen* consists of nine vertical figures arranged over three sections: a corridor and two platforms. The *Willkommen* platform represents the host country – in this case, West Germany – while the other platform, with a sign saying “*Arrivederci*”, indicates the



Vlassis Caniaris
Boudoir, 1970
detail from
installation view
at Kunstverein
Heidelberg, 1975
Courtesy of the
Estate of the artist

country of origin – in other words, Greece. The clothing and size of the figures provide clues as to their nationality and social class as well as their standard of living. The southern-European-looking figures on the *Arrivederci* platform seem more miserable than their taller, better-dressed *Willkommen* counterparts, the female figures of which correspond clearly to a Germanic body type.⁵ Between the two platforms – the one which bids farewell and the other which greets – there is a railway made of wooden crates with wagons being pulled by a small drummer boy. This corridor symbolises the movement of the Greek migrants, who seem to be trapped in an unpleasant hostage situation, condemned to travel to and fro perpetually.

In interview, Caniaris likens this tug of war to the character of Zampanò, the wandering circus strongman played by Anthony Quinn, the ‘naturalised Greek’, in Fellini’s *La Strada*. This comparison with Fellini’s film and its hero discloses on the one hand the existential ballast of the installation and on the other the proletarian character and difficult social position of the migrants of that time. According to Caniaris, “The two platforms are the same mechanism. The capitalistic mechanism that – for many and sundry reasons – pushes out the migrants is the same mechanism that welcomes them and uses them. Hence *Arrivederci* – *Willkommen*. It’s not a matter of finding out the why and how, but this is the truth. Under Karamanlis the country lost a large number of workers for whom it could not provide work.”

In fact, according to historical analysts, in contrast to the so-called ‘mobilised diaspora’, national groups that functioned in the framework of the colonial empires of the nineteenth and part of the twentieth centuries, the Greek *Gastarbeiter* of the Federal Republic of West Germany in the sixties and seventies made up a part of the proletarian diaspora.⁶ It should be stressed – and this relates directly to Caniaris’s comments – that there was continuous movement of workers, especially during the seventies, between their country of origin and the country that took them in. The historian Lina Ventura notes, “After the signing of the German–Greek Agreement of 1960, Germany successfully

organized the flow of immigrants: migration toward the country was equal to 53 percent of the total number of post-war migrants. [...] According to calculations, 58 percent of Greek migrants to Germany came two and three times. Shortly before the end of migration in 1973, almost one migrant in five of those who had headed toward West Germany arrived for a second or third time.”⁷

The artist provides similar information relating to the functioning framework and political promotion of the labour force in the recent migratory experience of Greek society, but this time as the host country for migrants: “In those days, migration in Germany was controlled, as I suspect was true in other countries as well. Those who were interested passed through a committee and an office in Athens – and corresponding offices in Germany – who were looking for a certain number of workers or specialised abilities. They

were given a permit, a pink paper, a copy of which was included in the catalogue of my exhibition in Germany. At least, at that time, there was some control; they weren’t all illegal immigrants. This does not mean that conditions were better. They were worse. But what was written in all the studies was that when the number of foreigners reached 10 percent of the population, there would be problems and very severe, acute ones. We have exceeded that number here and that is why this situation has developed.”

In speaking of the wave of migration in the sixties and early seventies,

Caniaris emphasises in particular the children of the migrants, who are the focal point of the *Emigrants* series. “What interested me most – and I aimed at this especially – was the children of this generation, who were two, three, four, five years old at the time. Little children... that’s why I have included the garbage cans, the toys, the baby carriages, the bicycles...”⁸

Arrivederci – *Willkommen* is the most mature work of the *Emigrants* (1971–1976) series, which was begun in Paris after the artist left Greece in 1969 and completed when he returned in 1976 (in order to teach at the Polytechnic).⁹ The theme took on new forms in the large installation entitled *Hélas–Hellas*, presented by Technochoros-Bernier in the abandoned Fix ice factory in Athens in 1980. For Caniaris,

there’s not a great difference between *Emigrants* and *Hélas–Hellas*: “I don’t think they are different works from beginning to end. The conditions change, and the reasons change, as do the materials that the artist uses to transform [the work].”¹⁰ And he continues by saying, “To be honest, I really can’t reconsider the theme of the migrants as I did then. In any case, I am neither an economist nor a sociologist... At that time, I associated with people who kept me informed. [...] What can I say today? It is a timely subject”.

The continued timeliness of *Arrivederci* – *Willkommen*, however, does not lie (only) in its aspect of dispute or protest, on which most interpretations of the work have been based. A more careful reading shows Caniaris reflecting the socio-political pessimism of Adorno and his ideas regarding both the proletariat (as a historic subject which leads to progress) and art (as a rupture and resistance against society).¹¹ “My approach,” says the artist, “was always to give shape to something that preoccupied me. But I no longer expect a revolution from such works – that is, to have a revolutionary language like those of that time, which were influenced by May 1968. I never really believed in those things. I’m not one of the fanatics of May. I don’t believe in sudden changes in the world. Everything needs time in order to mature.”

Caniaris’s stance was one of the reasons that, when a 1973 exhibition took place in Berlin during his DAAD scholarship he came into open conflict with politicised groups, which, as well as providing partial financial support for the exhibition, were to help him install and transport the works. “[They] hoped that the moment I handled such a topic [migration] – something no one else had dealt with up to that time – I would issue manifestos. They wanted the work to function as a poster. But all that was of no interest to me, and we clashed. And, of course, they all abandoned me, both the Greeks and the Germans, leaving me alone with the public. I think that [my works] are, without my wanting it, politicised. In other words, they speak about a social anguish, and it doesn’t matter whether it is ‘Left’ or ‘Right’ or ‘revolutionary’. It is an anguish that exists regardless. Personally, that is what interested me and, simply put, that is what I did”.

Perhaps the final point to linger on is the way in which the concept of the installation can be re-evaluated in light of contemporary theoretical analyses. Prominent among these is the argument of art critic Claire Bishop. She explores this particular type of art not in relation to theme or materials but through the experience of the (fragmented) subject. More specifically, Bishop examines the history of the installation according to four types of viewer experience, “four torches”, as she calls them, that shed light on the history of installation art. Her first model of the viewing subject is based on the psychoanalytical theory of Sigmund Freud, the second on the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and the third on the Freudian death drive, the disintegration of the subject and related post-structural interpretations. The fourth, which draws from the theories of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, focuses on the viewer as a political subject. In short, Bishop maintains that we cannot consider installation art separately from post-structural theories about decentring of the subject, which developed during the sixties and seventies. As she writes, “What installation art offers is an experience of centring

and decentring; work that insists on our centred presence in order then to subject us to an experience of decentring.”¹²

Bishop’s analysis would suggest that, in our case, we should focus not on the (migration) theme of the installation *Arrivederci* – *Willkommen* but on the model of the subject that it proposes. And without doubt, despite the fact that the anthropocentric works of Caniaris are narrative-based, his installations destabilise the experience of the viewer without imposing an absolute ideological point of view. Like the tableaux of Ed Kienholz and George Segal – art that, as Bishop notes, is characterised by a symbolic and psychologicistic *mise-en-scène* – Caniaris comments on the public sphere of a country in which he never felt at home. His distanced and unavoidably controversial stance, his quest for an alternative experience through a frail socio-political system – these render a work like *Arrivederci* – *Willkommen* extremely topical today.

A version of this text by Christoforos Marinos was first published in the catalogue *Vlassis Caniaris: Arrivederci – Willkommen* – 1976, on the occasion of Caniaris’s exhibition at the Kalfayan Galleries, Athens, 2009.



NEUTRAL WITNESS: CANIARIS AT THE 1988 VENICE BIENNALE

by Emmanuel Mavrommatis

Leading on from his *Emigrants* series, Caniaris's exhibition in Venice twenty-five years ago observed the economic relationship between North and South

Vlassis Caniaris's work at the 1988 Venice Biennale operates on two levels. The first concerns *painting* and summarises the preceding processes of the artist's inquiry into the relationship between the painter and his world. This is further enriched by a new relationship between the artist and his own self; he observes himself through a world in which he is the witness. The second level is *sociological* and summarises the artist's critical processes during the observation of the interfaces between his artistic work and the problems of the relationship between North and South.

Here the artist once more applies himself to the theoretical substructure of his previous work, *Emigrants*, placing it within a new geographical, social and economic context. For the *Emigrants* series, workers from southern Europe were observed during the development of their relationship with the North as they become incorporated into the very heart of the economy of the northern countries to which they had moved. This stage in the relationship between North and South Caniaris now expresses through a new series of works at the Biennale. In this series, migration and corresponding geographical movements are replaced by a different form of relationship, wherein the South is the exporter, supplying the northerners' tables with a wide variety of fruits and vegetables.

This new form of economic dependence is accompanied, however, by a visual and cultural change in the image of the protagonists in novel, unequal, social and economic process. The southerner is no longer the poor emigrant in second-hand clothing; he is now dressed more fashionably and has, in essence, combined his economic dependence with a cultural one. The artist, divided between the world he had once observed during the post-war years and, simultaneously, the present-day one, is a non-participating, neutral witness. He has no power over events and remains perched on his former plastered walls with their inscriptions. From there, he observes the economic process. These walls are gradually covered, concealed, by walls of new, modern constructions, bare and functional.

At the same time, the artist belongs to the modern world and is culturally endowed by it. Split as he is in a double, as it were, self-portrait, his only true substance, that of a simple spectator, is brought to the fore. He records his own being as one of the components of a social and economic process, but he also reminds us that he is to be found nowhere, except as a reflection of the images of his own being seen through the various worlds he has lived in. The compositional focus of his work contains a new approach to our times, to the problems of modern art being structurally and functionally incorporated into social and economic processes. The artist indicates that he is not in a position to apprehend the process of his work other than by recording the ways in which this work reports on, or offers a critique of, each form of the social mechanism. Thus, the artistic proposal takes on forms that reveal these mechanisms as social structures and as what constitutes both the form and the techniques of the work itself.

A version of this text was originally published in the catalogue *Vlassis Caniaris: Grecia, XXXVIII Biennale di Venezia, 1988*.



Vlassis Caniaris, *Observer*, 1980/2005
mixed media, 140 x 60 x 60 cm
installation view at *The Encyclopedic Palace*
55th Venice Biennial
Courtesy of The Breeder, Athens

THE MIRACLE OF ST MICHAEL'S

by Tom Morton



FROM LEFT:
Alexander Tovborg, *Bocca Baciata LIX, LX, LVII, LXV*, 2014
acrylic and fabric collage on canvas, 310 x 195 cm
Courtesy of Galleri Nicolai Wallner
Photos by Anders Sune Berg

This short story was written to accompany *Bocca Baciata*, an exhibition of paintings of dinosaurs by the Danish artist Alexander Tovborg at the Overgaden Institut for Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, in 2014. Transposed to this issue of *South as a State of Mind*, which pays special attention to compass points, it might be read with the world of the dinosaurs in mind. In the Early Triassic era, climatic conditions, and even land-mass configurations, were markedly different from today. The most complex consciousness on Earth belonged (we think) to a reptile. There was no human concept of east and west, north and south.

"Why is it," said Zhongli Quan, as he primed the black silk wings of his bow tie, "that none of your great painters thought the dinosaur a suitable subject for depiction?" This question was spoken into the mirror that hung in Quan's college rooms, quite the best available to Trinity's undergraduates, but was addressed to Ken Carpenter, who had arrived panting half an hour ago, having cycled from his modest digs at modest Wolfson, and whose own bowtie was not silk, nor even really a tie at all, but rather an abbreviated polycotton sheepshank, black only in the way that a dust-strafed blackboard is black, and which girdled his Adam's apple on a slackening length of elastic.

"1827," continued Quan, shooting his cuffs at his own reflection. "The Reverend William Buckland becomes the first human being to describe a fossil dinosaur in scientific terms, giving it the genus *Megalosaurus*, and the species *Megalosaurus bucklandii*. This was new knowledge, so we can give the Romantics a pass – Delacroix, don't you think, would have painted a wonderful *Triceratops*. But what do we get after that? Some smudgy sea monsters in late Turner, a few implausible Jabberwockies in Burne-Jones and the French Symbolists. Nothing, of course, from the Impressionists. And the twentieth century! Where is my Pointillist plesiosaur, my Vorticist *Velociraptor*?

Where, oh where, is my Cubist *T. Rex*? Now tell me, Kenneth, how do I look?’

“Very smart,” said Ken, from within his tired, hired dinner jacket. Quan was reading Geology, and he was reading Art History, but here on the evening of the Trinity May Ball, as on every evening they’d spent together in their three years at Cambridge, it was the Chinese boy who brought up what Ken’s father called, with beery disdain, the subject of “pretty pictures”. Perhaps it was Quan’s time at Le Rosey that caused him to do this; the patrician manners he’d learned there – alongside all those pubescent Rothschilds and Hohenzollerns, all those Glücksburgs and Hohenlohes – demanded that he cultivate his conversation always in the warm, pliant soil of his interlocutor’s comfort zone. Or perhaps this heir to the Shandong Mining Group (Non-Ferrous Metals) really *was* fascinated by Chardin and Courbet, Piero and Pontormo, or perhaps – and this was Ken’s dark wish – his real fascination was with Ken himself, the state-school kid who fell asleep each night in his lonely bed, semen cooling on his belly, dreaming of his Huángdi, his handsome, unhaveable Emperor. Not that he would ever find out the truth. Tomorrow, Quan would leave Cambridge forever, flying back to China, and the family business, and its mad, unimaginable wealth. Ken would remain here, taking up a place at the university seminary. Art History had, he thought, prepared him well for life as a vicar. The key thing wasn’t to believe (this was the Church of England, after all), or even to experience a better class of doubt. The key thing was to ache.

“Dinosaurs,” said Quan, crouching to tie his laces, and slipping a small, plastic bag into the top of his left sock. “Kenneth, I’m serious. Why would none of your painters touch them? Fascinating creatures – my father’s always unearthing them in his mines – and I understand they played a significant role in killing off your God.”

“Too modern, at first,” said Ken, ignoring the dangling bait, “and then not modern enough. Dinosaurs look a lot like dragons, and dragons were never going to fly with the twentieth-century avant-garde. They’re medieval. Worse, they’re Victorian. Think of the Futurist manifesto: cars running on machine-gun fire, propellers roaring like a fascist mob, violent electric

moons. That lot wanted to flood the museums, not fill them with paintings of *Diplodocus*.” Briefly, Ken pictured water rising in a great, vaulted gallery space. Drowned canvases. A school of coelacanths swimming by. Sodden parquet floors.

“You Westerners have a lot to learn about dragons,” said Quan, picking up a paper fan from his dressing table, and snapping it into its lacquered case-ment. This he tapped three times against Ken’s chest. “Come on, Kenneth. The ball’s already started, and I want to show you off. I don’t think anybody at Trinity has ever seen a Wolfson man in black tie before.”

Later, when the June sun finally set on the college gardens, and the marquees began to glow like yellow lanterns in the gathered dark, and everywhere there was the smell of honeysuckle and the shimmer of distant music, Quan led Ken down to the riverbank. They had each drunk, by Ken’s reckoning, a full bottle of champagne, and the English boy was unsteady on his feet. A rowing boat was moored by the water’s edge. Quan stepped briskly aboard.

“Is this thing yours?” said Ken, landing heavily inside the wooden hull. The boat rocked, then stilled.

“Punts are for tourists,” said Quan, by way of an answer. “Come on, let’s go on a little trip.” Settling Ken on the slatted seat, the Chinese boy let slip the rope, and pushed off from the riverbank.

“No oars,” said Ken, as the current caught them, buoying them past Trinity, past St John’s, on towards the Bridge of Sighs.

“Don’t worry, Kenneth, the river knows where we’re going.” Quan reached down into his left sock, and fished out the small plastic bag. “Now, open your mouth.”

As soon as Ken parted his lips, he felt his friend’s finger swipe along his gum line, scouring it with something granular and bitter-tasting. His drunkenness took on a sudden, unfamiliar edge, hard and bright and needful.

“What are you doing?” asked Ken, pulling away. It wasn’t the drugs that shocked him, although Quan, to his knowledge, had always shunned pills and powders. Rather it was the intimacy, the unexpected meeting of flesh and flesh. Other human beings had put parts of their body in his body (doctors, dentists, one

disastrous girlfriend), but this was not the same, no not the same at all.

Quan raised his finger to Ken’s lips, first shushing them, then squirreling between their folds. That taste again. That texture.

“Ground dragon’s bones,” said Quan.

The boat passed beneath the bridge. Quan took Ken’s hand, and placed it on his thigh. Ken felt something firm beneath the soft fabric of his trousers. The fan. No.

Then Quan leaned in, and Ken’s heart opened up like never before.

* * *

The Reverend Ken Carpenter didn’t hate his job, or his workplace – rising from a recently gentrified corner of East London, the Gothic Revival St Michael’s had what he was pleased to call “good bone structure”. No, what the Reverend Ken Carpenter hated was his congregation. Like many English churches, his was affiliated with an excellent church school, and like many excellent church schools, this one had recently adopted a policy of only admitting children from families who made a “clear and regular demonstration of their Christian faith”. Over the past year, Ken’s usual sparse flock of septuagenarians, dry alcoholics and lost-looking immigrants had been joined, then quickly supplanted, by a new type of parishioner: the pushy middle-class parent, happy to feign supplication if it meant their kids could avoid the vivid horrors of London’s comprehensives, or the anti-egalitarian taint of its fee-paying schools. They arrived at his services in a spirit of bustling cheerfulness, belted out the opening hymn, sat tolerantly through his sermon, mumbled a few prayers, rallied themselves for the closing hymn (always, by popular request, the loathsome “Lord of the Dance”), and then applied themselves to what they obviously considered the really serious aspects of religious observance: discussing whether the parish magazine should be typeset in Helvetica Inserat or Akzidenz-Grotesk, or whether the cakes in the church bake sale should be lactose- and gluten-free. Everywhere in St Michael’s were the signs of their growing influence. The noticeboard pinned with flyers for Alpha Courses, Mindfulness

Workshops and Hot Bikram Yoga. The Children’s Play ‘n’ Pray Space, with its herd of donated Eames elephant stools. In a bruising putsch, responsibility for the flower arrangements had been wrested from a pair of elderly spinsters and was now the province of a lawyer’s wife who described herself to an astonished Ken as an “up-and-coming botanical artist”, much influenced by Japanese ikebana. The Bible study group was reading Khalil Gibran. A pilgrimage had been proposed to see the Chagall chapel at Assy, followed by a week’s snowboarding in nearby Chamonix.

If St Michael’s was, for its congregation, simply another corner of the world to remake in their own confident and smoothly tasteful image, then this didn’t seem to trouble the senior clergy of the diocese. Pews were being filled like never before, and when Ken had gently suggested to the archdeacon that something precious – a thing not subject to contract, a thing close perhaps to grace – had been sluiced from the church by this tide of new worshippers, he was swiftly and firmly rebuked. In two days’ time, a TV crew would arrive to film a documentary, *The Miracle of St Michael’s*, focusing, so the producer had told him on the phone, on “Christianity as a relevant lifestyle choice for the busy young professional”. Their visit would coincide with Michaelmas, feast of the church’s titular archangel, a day on which debts were traditionally settled and final reckonings made.

That night in the vicarage, like most nights in the vicarage, Ken lay down on his bed with his laptop bobbing on his belly, and trawled the hook-up sites for men who might summon the memory of his distant Quan. Five years had passed since the boat and the bridge, five years since love had tapped his hollow, echoing chest. Waking up the morning after the ball on an unfamiliar stretch of riverbank – his gums tingling, his awful dinner jacket muddled, his body pungent and pleasantly sore – Ken found that Quan had already left for his flight to China. There was no note, although his smartphone lay nearby, alongside the empty bag, its smashed screen the colour of a bluebottle’s wing. Back at Wolfson, Ken discovered that every one of Quan’s social networking accounts – even his Renren, even his Weibo – had been closed down. The Chinese boy did not return to Cambridge to pick up his degree.

Ken attempted to contact him, of course. He emailed every plausible address at the Shandong Mining Group (Non-Ferrous Metals), meeting only with error messages and silence. He sent postcards c/o the company's HQ – images of great lizards by Uccello, Ingres, Moreau – all of them unanswered, and once called a woman he was sure, from his frantic web searches, must be Quan's PA, only to be informed that he had reached the Qingdao Sheraton, and would he be interested in hearing about their conference facilities, or perhaps booking a treatment at their spa? Defeated, Ken took to spending long, listless hours contemplating Quan's picture in *Forbes* and *Fortune* and *Businessweek* (still beautiful, still brandishing his lacquered fan like a Daoist Immortal), and obsessively feeding the *Cankao Xiaoxi*'s wedding column into Google Translate, fearing that his beloved, surely against the true bearing of his heart, had taken some tiny, perfect bride. Alone in a darkened St Michael's, he had even knelt at the altar, and prayed. None of these rituals served to call Quan to his side.

At one a.m., as Ken was about to log off, a message appeared in the chatbox. His correspondent's profile picture was a close-up of single, slender finger. His username was Konglong.

> *Kenneth, I think I may have finally found an answer to my question.*

Ken paused. No. Just some guy. He waited for the chatbox to fill with the usual jpegs of waxed cocks and willing arseholes, the usual offers of this in there, or there. He wouldn't *do* anything about it – he never did – but he would take some brief, dulled pleasure in the possibility that he might.

> Kenneth. KENNETH! I know you're there, Kenneth, so do please pay me the courtesy of a reply.

Ken's fingers moved to the keyboard. Typed.

>> *What question?*

> *The dinosaurs question, Kenneth!*

>> *Quan?*

> Zhongli Quan, BSc (Cantab), CEO of the Shandong Blah Blah (Non-Ferrous Whatever), and the boy who, if you recall, once made the future Reverend Ken Carpenter sigh beneath the Bridge of Sighs.

>> ...

> Look, Kenneth, I haven't got time to wait while you deliberate over what to type next. I'm sending you a delivery. Rather a big delivery. My courier will meet you outside St Michael's tomorrow after evensong. Oh, and Kenneth?

>> ...

> Close your mouth.

* * *

The lorry drew up to St Michael's at seven, just as Ken had finally ushered the last few congregants from the church grounds. They had been more than usually pleased with themselves this evening, purring with anticipation at the arrival of the TV crew tomorrow. Matins would be full. With practised ease, the driver parked his vehicle with its back facing the church door. The shipping container fixed to the flat-bed was bright red and marked with the Shandong Group's logo. Whatever was inside it had travelled all the way from China. The cabin opened, and the driver stepped down, followed by two more men wearing overalls and peaked caps. They walked briskly up to Ken, bowed, and then straightened. The driver held out his hand.

"Keys," said the driver.

Ken stared at him.

"Keys to church."

Ken patted at his vestments, found the heavy iron ring. Wordlessly, he passed it over.

"You come back tomorrow, Mr Vicar. Seven o'clock. Before morning prayers."

Ken nodded, and turned towards the vicarage. The future was in Quan's hands.

* * *

The first thing Ken noticed when he walked up to St Michael's the next morning was that the lorry had vanished, replaced by a large, metal dumpster. Poking out from its top like periscopes, the trunks of the Play 'n' Pray Space's elephant stools – lime-green, baby-blue, a queasily surgical pink – shone in the new day's sun. The church noticeboard, still plastered with ads for reiki therapists and silent retreats,

had been broken in half and tossed in alongside several bushels of expensively Spartan floristry. Copies of *The Prophet* and *Jonathan Livingstone Seagull* lay scattered at the dumpster's bottom, alongside a few items gifted by Ken's congregants to the archdeacon's Harvest Festival foodbank: one bag of brown rice, and another of quinoa, a pack of replacement BRITA water filters, some herbal supplements, an artisan rye loaf. Quan's men had left the keys in the church door.

Ken's phone vibrated. An SMS. The TV producer. The crew was on its way. He turned the key, and pushed at the heavy oak.

The pews had been moved to the side of the nave. Along its length, illuminated only by the sunlight that streamed steadily, unstoppably, through the church's stained glass windows, stood the skeleton of a vast and long-necked dinosaur, its brown bones supported by a steel armature, its tail trailing through the crossing and the chancel and on into the apse, where its tip grazed the far-off altar stone. In the silence before morning prayers – those bland bargains blandly struck – it seemed to Ken that this fossil beast could always have been here, should always have been here: proof not of the folly of belief, but of the existence, in some unknowable time and place, of unknowable energies, and grandeur. Quan stepped from the shadows.

"*Zingongosaurus fuxiensis*," said Quan, as he crossed the church's stone floor towards the beaming Ken. "I did toy with the idea of sending you a Western dinosaur, a *Brontosaurus* or some such, but my family's company seems to be digging an awful lot of these fellows out of our mineshafts right now, quite a surplus in fact, so we can afford to spare one for our poor *gweilo* cousins. Besides, a church named after St Michael simply cries out for a dragon."

Ken was still looking, rapt, at the creature's skull, at the way the stained glass glowed through its eye sockets, through its mouth, almost as though it were breathing fire.

"Kenneth, aren't you going to say something?"

"He is risen, therefore he can be laid in the grave."

"Yes, yes. All that stuff. Anyway, the TV crew will

be here any moment, along with all those ghastly, grabby people you've been ministering to. Time to leave, my pretty vicar. There's somewhere we must be."

"What about the answer to your question?"

"Oh Kenneth, you've always been such a literalist," said Quan, taking Ken's hand, and leading him towards the door.

* * *

As the boat drifted lazily down the river, past Queens' College, past King's, onwards towards Clare, Ken listened to a voicemail from the TV producer. In rushed, excited tones, she relayed the extraordinary events of that morning. The congregants gathering around the dinosaur skeleton, their sleek heads bowed in silent contemplation. The arrival of the archdeacon, who fell immediately to his knees and recited – against all sectarian proscriptions – the Orthodox Jesus Prayer. Once word of the dinosaur began to circulate on social media, more and more people flocked to the church: kids from the nearby housing estates, hung-over hipsters, the imam from the borough mosque, the local MP. News photographers held their cameras high above the crowd, the better to snap at the sauropod's grinning maw. A palaeontologist was interviewed in the churchyard by a BBC outside broadcast unit and wrongly identified the creature as *Apatosaurus*. A bishop appeared and blessed its ancient bones. *The Miracle of St Michael's*, said the producer, would surely be the highlight of her career. There was only one voice missing from the documentary. Would Ken – any time, no really, any time at all – please call her back for a chat?

Quan took the phone from Ken's hand and tossed it into the river. The boat floated on, past Trinity, past St John's. While it was dark, it was warm for September, as though each star in the Cambridge sky was beaming its heat across the countless parsecs, so that it might draw sweat from these Earth boys' humming skins. Quan produced his fan and beat at the heavy air.

"Our bridge," he said, pointing up ahead.

A few moments later, the sky disappeared.

"Open your mouth," said Ken. "Open your mouth."

HOTEL NORD-SUD, SOUTH VIEW

by Katarina Burin

Models and plans give body to a building that no longer or doesn't yet exist, designed by an interwar architect that never was



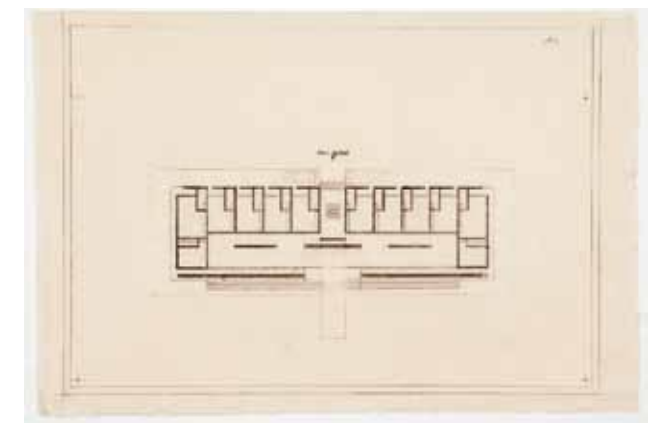
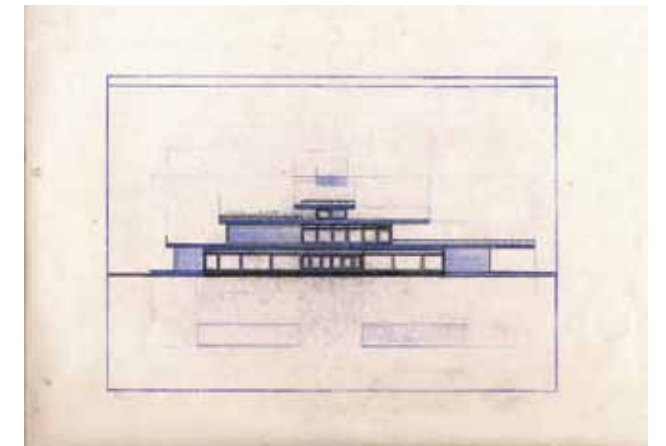
“Once again, I walked down those corridors, those walls, through the shaded light giving way to the sight of the sea. Being in the Nord-Sud was like being in a ship of cantilevered dreams, always there but long forgotten, in a lobby where bodies and objects revealed both their right to leisure and its illusion, a land governed by pirates but not by the police.”

– H.M. CARROLL, *Architectures of Eastern Europe*, 1933

The Hotel Nord-Sud was lodged near the town of Zadar, off the coast of Yugoslavia. Elegant signage announced the entrance to the remarkable lobby, situated on the ground floor, which boasted four-metre-high ceilings in a flexible open reception. An extensive use of glass allowed the constant sight of the sea through the structure's floating, transparent supports. The cantilevered roof, nautical and yet restrained, was balanced by symmetrical modular interior spaces. All of the fourteen cabin-like bedrooms and two suites had balconies, and the hotel offered both an impressive lookout café on the third floor and an open restaurant and bar on the second. Its most arresting design elements were the terraces that united interior to exterior, panes of glass separating the two. Being in the Nord-Sud,

as Carroll describes, was like entering a borderline space between inside and outside, ground and sea, which responded neither to the demands of nationalist architecture nor to the utopian abstraction of social space championed at the time by the International Style. The Nord-Sud was an interior space that let the outside directly in through intricate borders and permeable boundaries, exposing the language of modernist architecture to the specific historical and local conditions of a site.

The small hotel, the construction of which began in the turbulent year of 1932, was eventually understood as the signature interwar work of the architect Petra Andrejova-Molnár. This was the architect's first large-scale construction and one in which she worked through the elements that have since become essential to her designs. P.A., as she came to be known, was born Petra Jozefína Andrejova in Zlín (Moravian Czechoslovakia) in 1898. She studied at Vienna's Academy of Fine Arts and travelled extensively in the early 1920s, spending periods of time in Brno, Budapest, Prague, Vienna and Berlin. Greatly influenced by the fertile architectural exchanges of the interwar period, P.A. embraced modern materials and building techniques. As a student in Vienna, she would have been exposed to the Aus-



OPPOSITE PAGE:
Petra Andrejova-Molnár, Hotel Nord-Sud,
1932-34, model, south view

RIGHT:
ABOVE: Petra Andrejova-Molnár, Hotel Nord-Sud,
1932-34, façade
BELOW: floor plan

trian work of her Moravian predecessors Josef Hoffman and Adolf Loos, and, though her aesthetics would seem to be divorced from these earlier architects, she subtly drew from their approach to materials. The influence of Hoffman and Loos is most noticeable in the shade wall of the Hotel Nord-Sud. The light-capturing front wall, woven out of rectangles of different sizes, captured geometric light forms that were then rendered onto the tiles of the large open ground space. However, in contrast to Loos's and Hoffman's sobering designs, P.A.'s shade wall functioned as a porous partition rather than a limit or a division – outside elements were filtered, transformed and projected within. It exposed the building to its environment and let it be affected by the entropy of its natural site instead of shielding it from the landscape it was situated in.

The layering of the three horizontal floors with their overhanging open-air terraces both reacted to and emerged from the demarcation between land and sea, creating a sense of movement, like a passenger ship cruising along the coast. Shapes and materials came together in elaborate ways, composing a fluid geometry that felt light and effortless while distinctively demanding its own space, occupying a site situated between the openness of the sea and what

were at the time the shifting boundaries of the land. The lobby furniture – wall sconces, light fixtures and hotel signage – all reiterated the stylistic qualities of the hotel. Angular planes of different measures were layered onto each other, creating angles and protrusions, which composed the simultaneously dense and sparse design of tables and chairs. Attention was given to the form and movement of every detail, as if the forms introduced by the larger structure of the hotel lived also in the scaled versions of the furniture that occupied it from within.

Although the Hotel Nord-Sud was the culmination of P.A.'s formative years and in many ways synthesises the architectural trends of the time, it can also be seen as a structure that defines an era now lost to us, like the building itself. During the interwar period young architects such as Bohuslav Fuchs, Jaromír Krejcar and P.A. herself, to name a few, were at the centre of a vibrant architectural community in the newly established Czechoslovak and Hungarian People's Republics. In the shifting political arena of rediscovered boundaries, these architects were emboldened by the utopian spirit of the age and embraced an architecture that championed modernity, efficiency, functionality and a commitment to human progress and innovation. The city of



Brno rapidly became a centre for interesting architectural investigation and began to attract international attention. However, by 1932, the year of construction of the Nord-Sud, architecture in Central and Eastern Europe was no longer able to embrace hopeful internationalism or youthful idealism and experienced a forced hiatus occasioned by the war. The 1930s in Eastern Europe – marked by fierce territorial disputes and the rise of the nationalist movements – rendered any form of unification, through architecture or otherwise, nothing more than an illusion. While P.A. and many of her contemporaries continued practising architecture in various ways, they did so in a world vastly altered from the interwar years.

Despite having emerged in the utopian spirit of efficiency, functionality and commitment to human innovation, P.A. challenged many of her male contemporaries' premises. Her complex partitioned constructions appropriated the modern architectural language of her peers but refused ideas of organic synthesis and abstracted utopianism, focusing instead on a concrete relation to the social history of a landscape. The Nord-Sud was never a space of febrile illusion or escapism – its construction refused both the promise of a utopian regional unification and the abstraction of social space to the imposition of a style. Working with elements derived from historical research onto the local conditions of a site, the building engaged with an important conversation about the shifting boundaries between landscape and construction, work and leisure, inside and outside. P.A. championed a utopian belief in art and design, but one that was grounded in the geography and social history of a place. To a certain extent, she inhabits an alternative history of the women interwar architects that never were.

The Nord-Sud was destroyed in the Second World War. What remains of this crucial building are the models, plans and documents leading up to its construction. And although much of its furniture was lost to the destruction – and the dislocations wrought by the war have made tracing even portions of extant interwar work a Herculean task – some was later reproduced according to documentation. Looking at the models and plans created by Petra Andrejova-Molnár, one senses the nascent productive instability between imagined and constructed space. They appear to bear a resemblance to the vernacular language of architectural construction and yet refuse to merely represent the details of a space yet to be built. The models of P.A.'s work are those where photographs and collages, shaded areas of colour, angles and a particular sense of scale occupy and destabilise the rational lucidity of architectural planning. They put on display the model as a fiction, as a transferable form lingering between built space and the pictorial space of the visual arts, rendering conspicuous the selective and

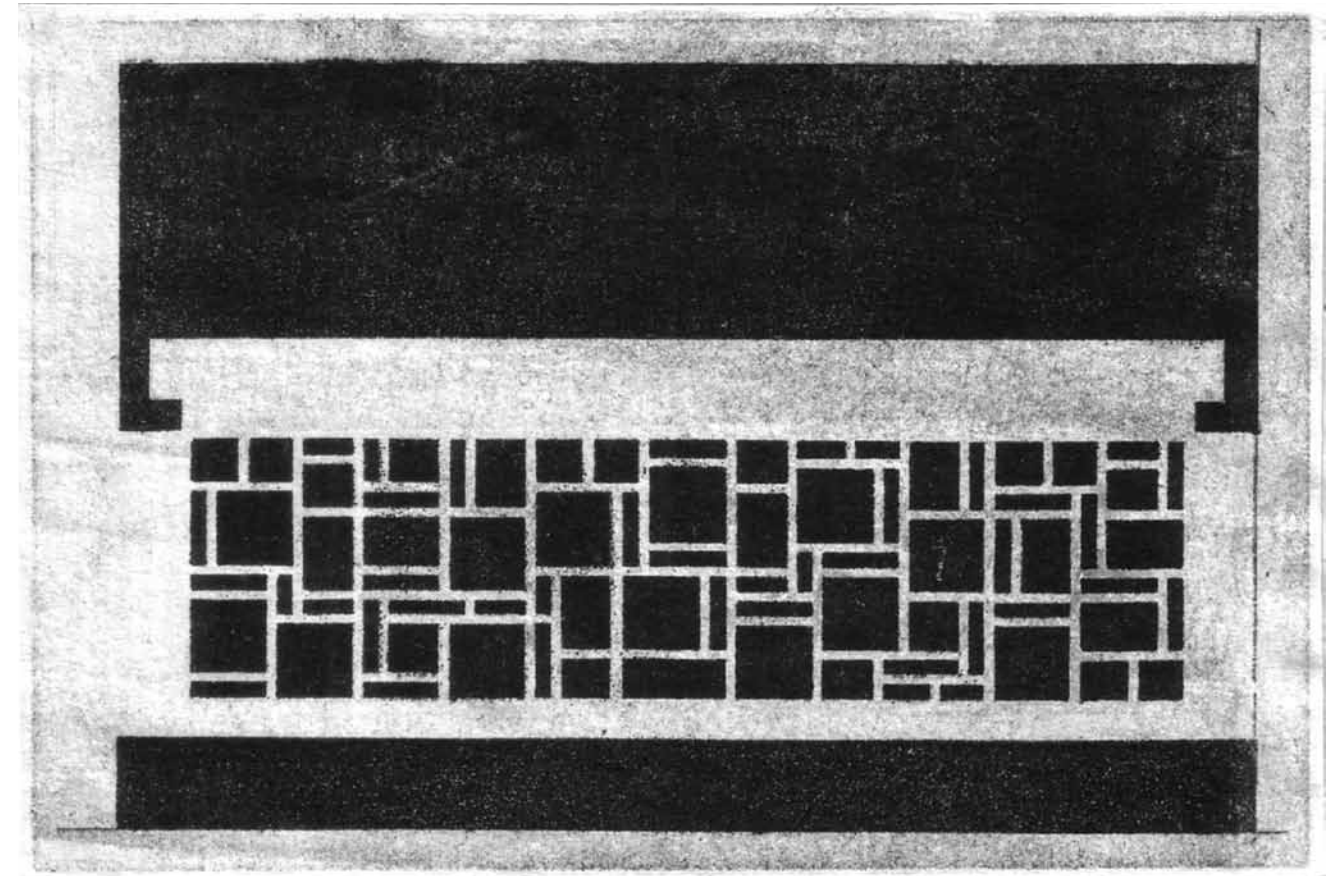
narrative fictions of architecture. Her remaining drawings, models, advertisements, interviews and catalogue essays give body to the imagination of a building that is no longer, or not yet, and carve for it a historical space of its own right. They move beyond the linear definition of architectural model as a prototype, emphasising an inherent suspension between their function as an object of knowing – a historical object and a trace of a material and an event – and its locus as a product of (and for) the imagination. P.A.'s models, drawings and planning materials draw the materiality of the nonvisible into the historical canon of built work, and in this gesture they lodge in the model its full potential – as an object of duration, hinging between the imagination of its past and the promise of a future transformation, as a record of history and a project for history, made in the present.

Excerpt from a text by historian Joana Pimenta written on the occasion of an exhibition dedicated to *Architectures of the South*, London Society for Landscape and Design, 2006.

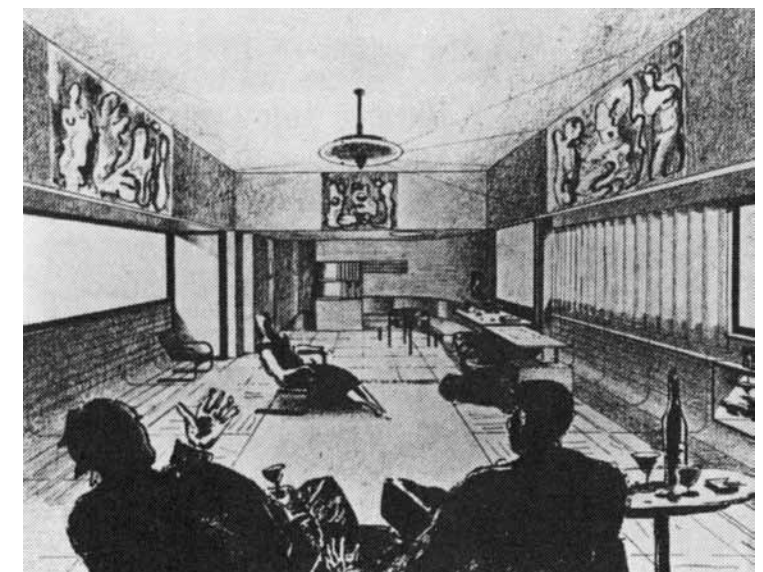
Petra Andrejova-Molnár

Petra Andrejova-Molnár (1898) was born in Zlín in Moravian Czechoslovakia. In 1907, she lived briefly with her family in Budapest, and in 1919, she began studying architecture at the School of Decorative Arts in Prague. She subsequently spent time in Vienna and Berlin and took part in *New House*, the first housing exhibition of the Czechoslovak Werkbund in Brno in 1927. In the same year, she worked on the Project for Modern Apartments developed by the Werkbund – a project that was never realised. Employed at the office of architect Bohuslav Fuchs between 1927 and 1929, she assisted in the design of Fuchs' Avion Hotel. A few years later, together with József Fischer, she supervised the construction of the House on Csátárka Street in Budapest, and in 1932 she began designing the Hotel Nord-Sud in Zadar, Yugoslavia. The hotel was later destroyed during the war. In 1939 she left Vienna for Berlin. Her activities during the war remain largely unknown. She emigrated to the United States in 1948 and died in Lincoln, Massachusetts in 1977.

TOP: Petra Andrejova-Molnár, Hotel Nord-Sud, 1932-34, north shade wall
BOTTOM LEFT: Petra Andrejova-Molnár, Hotel Nord-Sud, 1932-34, view of corridor



HOTEL NORD-SUD



Jiří Kroha, K. Tiege and J. Kroha Discussing a Socialist Flat, 1934

THE RISE OF THE INSTANT ACTIVIST

by Miguel Robles-Durán

...and how it's transforming the practice of architecture, urbanism
and the way our cities are built

The activist is fashionable again. In a movement reminiscent of the late 1960s, young practitioners from all creative fields seem to be turning against the establishment of their discipline. Without any political or critical position, the use of words such as 'participation', 'bottom-up', 'community', 'sustainability' and 'activism' seem again to be the trend for emerging creative practices, as well as for some of the former vanguard. Even governments pioneering urban reform, governments that once heavily funded suburban development and the creation of central business districts such as London's Docklands, Paris's La Defense or Amsterdam's South Axis, have begun to re-tune their rhetoric around such 'socially responsible' words.

This shift should come as no surprise to the architects of the policies that determine and construct our environment. It is a clear and logical step in the search for more perfected free-market stimuli in the form of urban development or redevelopment. How to make urban development look more bottom-up? How to get the people on the developers' side? How to project to the society that this or that redevelopment was justified by the consensus and approval of the community? If the urban developer can find solutions to these questions, there can be little civic opposition to their agenda, for, with the help of new 'activists', the project will have acquired the needed 'community support'. In this case, the new activism and its consensual-participatory approaches will have facilitated the process for major urban investments, helping promote inter-urban competition, large private urban investments, gentrification and the continuous commercialisation and privatisation of public space, all policies that remain at the forefront of the neoliberal governance of cities.

With the aim of promoting private urban investment or the formation of public-private partnerships, many pro-market international organisations, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have been hosting periodic congresses and publishing vast reports on topics such as 'City Competitiveness', 'Attractiveness of Cities', 'Sustainable Cities' and so forth. Among the many prescriptions given to participating cities, in the last five years, one constant key recommendation has been the need to persuade citizens to adopt new patterns of behaviour in favour of public-private urban investment and redevelopment, emphasising that this must not be seen as being imposed from the outside. The ideal, in fact, is for these new patterns to be achieved as if they had emerged from the bottom up. The reasoning is simple: the more constructed the 'community support', the more receptive the city becomes to urban investment, thus the easier its execution and profitability. In the light of many large urban redevelopment projects that have turned highly conflictive and costly for developers owing to citizen resistance – such as the neighbourhood of St. Pauli in Hamburg

or the coastal hotel infrastructure in Barcelona – the best thing for a redevelopment public-private partnership is to engage the community with part of the project from its inception and instrumentalise the 'activist' into making the redevelopment process as justified and seamless as possible. The community seemingly gets what it wants and the developers make a profit! In this regard, over the last five years, the market has made a great leap in incorporating the new activist into its daily operations. In this co-opted form, we could discuss the work of the new activist in participatory redevelopment or in slum regeneration, eco-environmentalism, camp betterment and so forth. In most of these practices, there will always be a hidden market agenda that needs and finances them.

The social importance of the new activist practice *en masse* can be easily represented with a few leftist slogans and seductive photo-ops of people helping those in need. This too is what the instant 'activist' needs to declare himself a member of the club. Suddenly, by following this two-step formula, a large part of the hip creative class can be turned overnight into 'activists'. It is at the moment when the 'real' is replaced by the hegemony of the market that an unconscious disengagement with the 'political' occurs and the apolitical posture of the fashion pseudo-world thrives. Fashion needs to reduce language to slogans, it survives through the endless reproduction of false images, one-liner rhetoric, simulacra for dummies. Ultimately, fashion requires the replacement of social intelligence by the easiness of mediated perceptual consensus. It is then of no surprise that green revolutionaries are sworn in every day by the dozen, that participatory workshop leaders take over urban regeneration processes and that people who used to quote Richard Florida (and his 'creative economy') now magically begin to mix in some Agamben and Foucault in their conversations.

'Struggle', 'confrontation', 'justice', 'politics', 'conflict', 'urgency', 'necessity' and 'survival' are unnecessary words in the vocabulary of the instant activist. With such an easy incorporation to fad, why would the instant activist – concerned only with the allure of incorporation into a socially 'responsible' lifestyle – question the possible consequences of their actions on their surroundings? The seamless insertion of the instant activist into the new demands of the development market has gone unquestioned by the members of the club without any awareness of corporate development interests, without understanding of how public-private partnerships operate, without a clue about the political vicissitudes of gentrification and its mechanisms of displacement and spatial segregation, without knowledge of urban economy but with a lot of good intentions and expertise in the production of rhetorical slogans and images. Thus, the instant activist becomes an essential instrument for the 'new' and 'better'

practice of urban redevelopment, helping governments and private developers clean their bad image by masking it as 'democratic', ecological and socially responsible. The merge of the instant activist with redevelopment has been a 'win-win' situation – to borrow the expression used often by neoliberal demagogues. In short, this instant activism has no relevant position or strong identity: it just presents itself as another unconscious addition to the neoliberal army. As Herbert Marcuse wrote in 1964 about the coming of the one-dimensional men, the architects as instant activists "take a position on all critical issues, without a critical consciousness, without technical competence, and without ethical conviction, they go along with the established order".

Under the neoliberal umbrella, the image of the instant activist hunts and banalises the work of those creators who have constantly confronted themselves with the casualties of their political struggle, those who, out of lived experience, urgency and necessity, have persistently imagined ways to continue fighting against the present oppressions of their past. Under the current lingo, the struggling creator, the one that conflicts and opposes the neoliberal establishment from its roots, might be a rebel, a radical, a fundamentalist ideologue or a dysfunctional social actor, but never an 'activist'.

In contrast to the old critical and calculative struggles of the activist architect, the idea of the creative architect as an instant activist has recently been blown up out of proportion. This new breed of the market is being described as 'socially responsible' and is considered to be what art critic Harold Rosenberg described in *The De-Definition of Art* (1971) "as a person of trained sensibility, a developed imagination, a capacity for expression and deep insight into the realities of contemporary life". Rephrasing Rosenberg, the architect as instant activist has become, as it were, too big for architecture. His or her proper medium is working in the world, carrying a sustained belief in architectural responsibility, creativity and its mystical power to change the conditions of life. This aggrandisement and self-aggrandisement of the architect seems on the surface to represent an expanded confidence in the socially transformative powers of the architect today. As it is widely believed by its proponents, everything in the city can be solved and done through the 'activism' in architecture.

Anyone with a critical eye could easily look beyond the popular conceptions of the architect and the fad of instant activism, only to realise that its design knowledge and tools, which are typically connected to the evolution of formalisms, technicalities and ornamentation, become futile when confronted with the conflictive urban realities that construct our world and useless in the search of a more profound and dynamic understanding of the social relations that surround the production of urban space. The practice of activism as a political construct seems to have been replaced by the use of

activism as a sanitised image of consensual governance. The trend has been so well adopted by the ruling system that even those with a political practice have been absorbed by the 'activist' label under the 'new' meaning.

"During the last years of unprecedented deployment of neo-liberalist economic recipes of privatization, homogenization and control everywhere, architects", argues Teddy Cruz, "have remained powerless, subordinated to the visionless environments defined by the bottom-line urbanism of the developer's spreadsheet, making architecture simply a way of camouflaging corporate economic and political power, unconditionally." This sense of powerlessness and the inability of the architecture profession to lead the way in rethinking systems and institutions of urban development in our time is what should motivate a true activist practice: constructing an architectural practice that constantly seeks capacity to engage in the urban debate and have a socio-political leverage in the shaping of its territory. With this as their aim, architects could focus on the design and production of what Cruz describes as "critical interfaces between and across urban opposites, exposing conflict as an operational device to transform architectural practice".

The activist architect is never instant; he or she is made through a long and constant struggle to stand aware in critical opposition to the injustices of development. In the words of David Harvey in *Spaces of Global Capitalism* (2006), an insurgent practitioner "acts out a socially constructed (sometimes even performative) role, while confronting the circumstances and consciousness that derives from a daily life where demands are made upon time, where social expectations exist, where skills are acquired and supposed to be put to use in limited ways for purposes usually defined by others. The architect then appears as a cog in the wheel of capitalist urbanization, as much constructed by as constructor of that process". The activist must re-instate the political meaning of their practice, which not so long ago aimed to change our unjust reality.

First published in Lieven de Cauter, Ruben de Roo, Karel Vanhaesebrouck (eds.), *Art and Activism in the Age of Globalization*, naiOIO, Rotterdam, 2011.

CANOAS

Interview with Tamar Guimarães by Pablo León de la Barra

Set in the contemporary Brazilian cultural scene, an artist's film captures the mid-century glamour of a staged cocktail party at Oscar Niemeyer's Casa das Canoas



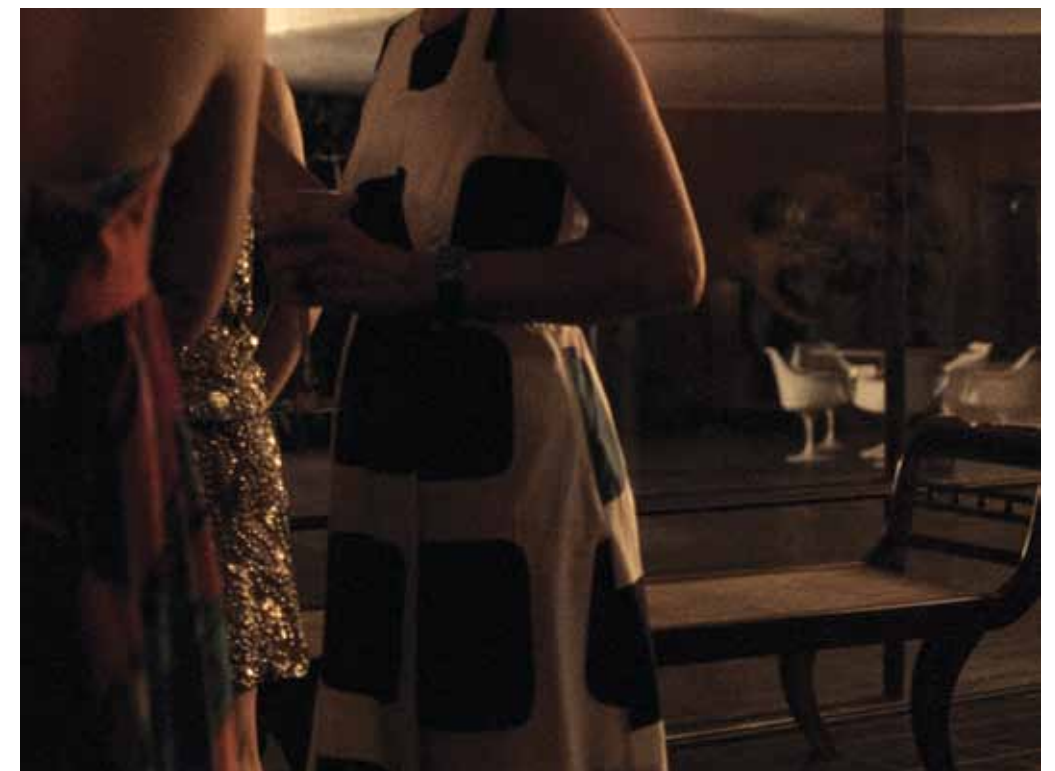
PABLO LEÓN DE LA BARRA: Dear Tamar, I hope you are well. Where are you? (I am in Mexico now!) In the summer of 2010 you invited me to attend a party at Oscar Niemeyer's Casa das Canoas in Rio de Janeiro. I remember how I wanted to go, after years of being obsessed with that particular house. The party was thought to be filmed and to be an art project. In another work made a year and a half later with Kasper Akhøj in Paris, *The Last Days of Watteau*, a party, a *fête galante*, which took place at the Hôtel Salomon de Rothschild, was also central. I remember we talked about parties in films that we loved, from Peter Sellers' *The Party* to scenes in movies by Antonioni and Fellini. Can you tell me

more about this fascination you have with the idea of parties, the situations and conversations that happen in them, and what it is that interests you about them?

More later, yours, love, Pablo

TAMAR GUIMARÃES: Pablo dear,

I like parties, especially the ones to which I am not officially invited, when I come as a friend of one of the guests. And since I can't take my welcome for granted, these spaces seem more alluring, as if I had to hurry to take in the place,



Tamar Guimarães, *Canoas*, 2010
stills from 16mm transferred to HD, 13 minutes 30 seconds, colour, sound
Commissioned for the 29th São Paulo Biennial, Brazil, 2010
Courtesy of the artist and Galeria Fortes Vilaça

décor and the genie that circulates there summoned by the collective body of party guests. The promise of a party is that one could open up for others and enter a flow of intensified emotional forces, like a sort of minor carnival. Thinking of the Biennial – that exercise in national image projection – I invited people who might have been going to the opening days of the São Paulo Biennial at the Ciccillo Matarazzo pavilion in the Parque do Ibirapuera to a more intimate pre-party at Niemeyer’s house. You would have been the perfect party guest! *Canoas* was shot with a mix of actors and non-actors in staged situations. I invited persons active in the Brazilian cultural scene, friends and friends of friends, for a staged party, to channel up some of the last four decades of Brazilian history (from the inception of the military rule to the present). As an initial premise, when I met and interviewed the guests prior to shooting I had proposed to each of them that instead of housing for the masses, modernist architecture in Brazil was in most cases a luxury item for the wealthy, and that the servant classes, which are a ubiquitous reality in the lives of Brazilian middle and upper classes, remain an inbuilt commodity in the pleasure machine which this architecture serves. I was saying we weren’t far from a master’s house and slave-hut system but that we were far from the Brazilian racial democracy that Gilberto Freyre talks about in his book *Casa-Grande e Senzala* from 1933 (*The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization*). I was also insisting on Freyre because of a suggestion that Brazilian modernism was nostalgic for the sensuality of colonial architecture and the farming estates. These were the main suggestions the guests were to respond to. We had nine actors and actresses and the others were formal guests. But I had invited others. Some, like the secretary of culture of São Paulo, never came, others, like an architect and urbanist connected to the IPHAN (Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional) sent an offended last-minute note declining the invitation. Something in my communication with him involving the words ‘orgiastic’ and ‘riot’ must have given him the impression we would be shooting porn. With a few exceptions (for example, the French-speaking group talking by the pool, who were instructed to improvise about the poor quality of Brazilian champagne), the other guests were ‘playing themselves’ to varying degrees. They were placed in precise situations (I had very little film stock and couldn’t do many retakes) and were asked to repeat things I had heard them say before, either in private conversation or in public talks – as was the case with Suely Rolnik’s performance in the film. Perhaps the issue of social class and the irony in *Canoas* were transparent to different publics, but to some extent foreign audiences missed the historical references beyond

Lygia Clark and the gentler humour. But in terms of references to other films it wasn’t *La Notte*, or Peter Sellers in *The Party* that I had in mind but the restaurant scene in Jacques Tati’s *Playtime*, in which a waiter gradually comes undone as the inaugural night of an elegant restaurant advances into a precariously yet perfectly balanced entropy. *Playtime* is one of my favourite films – in part because Tati precludes plot and main actors to a large extent and instead allows for an intersection of characters weaving across each other.

PLB: Living outside Brazil for so many years gives you a critical distance that allows you to see things Brazilians take for granted and don’t want to see. On the other hand, being from there allows you to avoid the easy romanticisms of Brazilian-ness to which too many foreign artists easily fall prey, especially when dealing with the ‘rediscovery’ of Otílica, Niemeyer, Clark, Bo Bardi, for whom a kind of art tourism has developed. Would you like to talk more about this in relation to Canoas?

TG: The film has many direct and indirect references and citations to people and things that I both love and admire but also doubt. The first time I went to Casa das Canoas, which is the house Oscar Niemeyer built for himself and his family in the early fifties, I was accompanying, almost begrudgingly, a Belgian friend who is in the habit of pilgrimagining to modernist monuments around the world. We were coming back from Burle Marx’s gardens, which are what I had wanted to see, but of course I was stunned by the house and happy with my friend for dragging me along. After marvelling at the house, it struck me that it was fairly small and felt more like a place where the owners would spend weekends. Had I squinted I might have been able to see women in cocktail-party attire roaming around by the pool. No doubt this was the case several times in recent years when the house was the stage for fashion shows, as well as a set for film and television. Later that day and for a few weeks I thought about filming there – a film in which one would see the preparations for a party. That’s all I knew at the time. Six months on, I was invited to propose a project for the São Paulo Biennial, and that’s when I started working on it. Reading about the house, I came across an account by Richard J. Williams suggesting that during the fifties and Juscelino Kubitschek’s presidency, Casa das Canoas had been a “critical part of Rio’s cultural infrastructure, providing a regular setting for cocktails for visiting dignitaries and intellectuals. The erotic charge of the house was no doubt more imaginary than real, but equally, there is little doubt that it helped to contribute – along with the beaches and the floorshow of Copacabana, and the genuinely uninhibited revelry of Carnival – to the myth of Brazil as an erotic paradise. [...] The house in this scenario is far more than the

European Modernists ever really envisaged. Far from being a ‘machine for living’, this is a riot of orgiastic pleasure.” I spoke with Niemeyer’s daughter in 2010 and she had no recollection of this. She said they didn’t live in the house for long. It was the only house in the area then and not easy to live in. When Kubitchek took Niemeyer to build Brasilia in 1957, Niemeyer’s wife and daughter moved to a flat in Copacabana. My initial idea was to visually reproduce the accounts which helped to fuel and maintain the glamorous image of this indeed extremely beautiful house – the play of light, the curves, water, the Atlantic forest remnants which surround it, etc. For example the house as recounted by the architect Ernesto Rogers: “I doubt that I shall ever forget that scene: the sun was just dipping below the horizon, leaving us in the dark sea of orange, violet, green and indigo [...] incense and the hum of insects; a vast rhapsody beginning in the roof vibrated down the walls and their niches to finish in the pool, where the water, instead of being neatly dammed up, spread freely along the rocks in a kind of forest pool.” *Canoas* was made for a Biennial at a point when economic growth turned to euphoria about the future. In 2010 there was an incredible mood of optimism in Brazil. An optimism that came together with economic confidence (with newly found oil, relatively little damage from the economic crisis which hit Europe and the US and with the promise of improved urban infrastructure and further economic gain to be had with the World Cup and the Olympic games). But Brazil wasn’t only economically uplifted – we were also further away from the bleakness of the dictatorship that ended in 1985, and much of what had been left hidden for nearly thirty years was surfacing with greater force. I wanted to produce an echo chamber in which to bounce the developmental euphoria of the fifties – when the then president Juscelino Kubitchek spoke of “fifty years in five” – onto what were our contemporary stakes.

PLB: In Glauber Rocha’s seminal 1965 text *Aesthetic of Hunger* he developed his manifesto of what Brazilian cinema should be: “Cinema Novo’s miserabilism is opposed to the digestive cinema championed by the oldest critic from Guanabara, Carlos Lacerda: films about rich people, in their houses, in luxury cars, happy funny fast films without messages, films with purely industrial aims. These are the films that stand in contrast to hunger, as if in luxury apartments, filmmakers could hide the moral wretchedness of a nebulous and fragile bourgeoisie, or as if the technical materials and sets themselves could hide the hunger that is taking root in this very uncivilization. Above all, as if through this tropical landscape apparatus, the mental indigence of the filmmakers who make this type of film could be dissimulated.” In *Canoas*, you portray a modernist luxury house and

a party of the Brazilian elite in order to talk about that which is not present. Would you like to talk more about this?

TG: I didn’t know Glauber’s *Aesthetic of Hunger* until yesterday, when you mentioned it, but it has two targets: the Brazilian elite and onlookers from developed countries, whom he accuses of paternalism and of longing for Primitivism – and Glauber includes ethnographers in that category, if we take the anecdote in which he called Jean Rouch (whose films he admired) a colonialist during an argument at a hotel lobby. He talks of hunger as an ontological condition for Latin America and asserts that Cinema Novo understands the hunger that Europeans and Brazilians in their majority can’t or don’t want to understand – a hunger produced by economic and cultural subordination. He describes a state of philosophical atrophy and impotent aesthetic forms, which, dully managed by cultural offices, nevertheless generates carnivalesque exhibitions and biennials, conferences and cocktail parties worldwide. The question of what or who is being portrayed in *Canoas* is not straightforward. I prefer indirect speech and I’m in the business of veiling some of what I want to talk about, but I actually think ‘hunger’ was in fact present in the room.

Interview originally commissioned by Vdrome on the occasion of the screening of Tamar Guimarães’ film *Canoas*, 17-26 February 2014.

THE FLORISTS FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE

by Tamar Guimarães

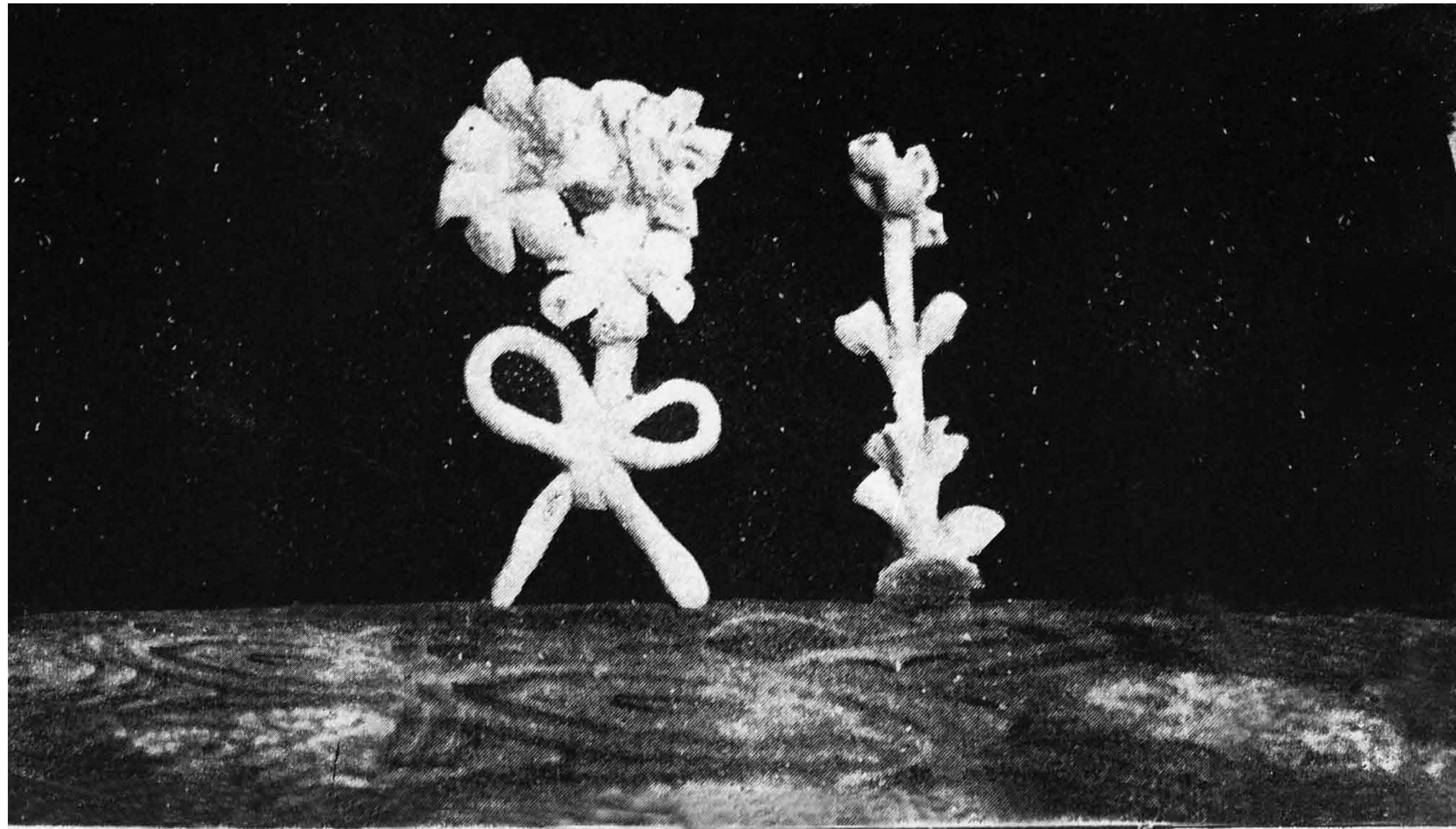
Studying Francisco Candido Xavier: Spiritism and socio-political struggle
in Brazil

He was a strange figure, and his camouflage included amusing wigs and dark glasses. He became a national celebrity at the age of sixty, having spent his life notating the words spoken to him by disembodied spirits.

Francisco Candido Xavier was a Brazilian psychic medium and psychographer – a ‘channeller’ of spirits through the written word. The dead spoke, and he wrote it down, as a kind of secretary – a task similar to the civil-service job he held until retirement. He has been described as “the biggest and most prolific psychographer worldwide of all times”, having written over 400 books. In the sixties and seventies he was a celebrity in Brazil, drawing large crowds whenever he appeared in public.

I have scrutinised Xavier for some time in order to investigate the predicament of a man entangled in the lace of a racism in disguise, the cordial racism prevalent in Brazil – a country that has not come to terms with the gap between its reality of white supremacy and its myth of racial democracy. So perhaps, in fact, this is about Brazil, its race relations, its social malaise, with the scrivener to the spirits himself a channel for Brazil’s turbulent history and social political anxieties – anxieties that seem to coalesce, crystallise and find new ‘incarnations’ in his work. Xavier’s literary work speaks of an ‘otherworld’ remarkably similar to the one he lived in. In *A Man Called Love*, my endeavour was to conjure up some of the historical developments re-staged, or shall I say reincarnated, in his work. I digressed from Xavier to some of the figures and events implicitly and explicitly alluded to in his writing, as well as to other texts that have come to shape my reading of him.

Initially I was interested in Xavier’s function as a scribe for the spirit world – I was entertained by the alternative meaning for the term ghostwriter and amused by a deliberate misunderstanding of the “death of the author”. Later, I thought that if history is the impossible conversation with the dead, as Michel de Certeau suggested, then the



*Um dos mais perfeitos trabalhos de Anita,
a florista de além-túmulo*

TRANSLATION: *One of the most perfect works of Anita,
the florist from beyond the grave*



PREVIOUS SPREAD, ABOVE:
Tamar Guimarães, *A Man Called Love*, 2008
stills from slide projection with voiceover
20 minutes, b/w and colour, sound
Courtesy of the artist
and Galeria Fortes Vilaça

medium had a privileged role as a history writer. I thought I could employ Xavier as an indirect means for talking about the underground left-wing movements in 1960s and 1970s Brazil. But soon it became clear that even though I could speak about Xavier's desire for social justice and universal well-being, implicating him and the rest of the Spiritist community in the struggle for socio-political reform was not going to be an easy task. The medium was indeed a historian, but not a channeller of the history I had desired. Xavier's huge popularity and, by the same token, Spiritism's popularity in Brazil coincided with the dictatorships of two periods: the Vargas Era of the 1930s and 1940s and the military dictatorship from 1964 to 1985.

It seemed as if Xavier was haunted by the phantasmagorias of the nation state: *order and progress* (the motto on the national flag), political sovereignty, world visibility, industriousness and commerce. His universe was shaped by lifetime employment as a typist at a government model farm. When he writes of the city of the dead, it resembles the world of state propaganda and the highly bureaucratic and hierarchical universe that he inhabited.

At any rate, speaking of Xavier's public life and work without hermeneutic violence presented substantial difficulty. Could I avoid reducing him, his context and his work to a set of socio-political and psychoanalytic signs? Could I discuss his mystical accounts in ways other than neurotic symptoms, replacing it for the stuff of class, race, geography and colonial trauma? I would need to defer too quick a reading of Xavier in order to understand his work differently, would need to delay brutality in order to produce different readings.

In the project that became known as *A Man Called Love* (2008), the medium's inner experience remained a leftover, a residue, untouched by whatever seemed necessary to address first, in order to clear the way for its postponed approach. The socio-political events of the eponymous "neighbouring" city on the astral plane as described in *Nosso Lar* (Our Home; 1943), one of Xavier's most famous books, were seen in the light of symptomatic re-stagings of social structures in disarray.

What I postponed until later was to insist that his mystic experience and re-imagination of social space was a

form of resistance – albeit a resistance that had to grapple with the constraints of a repressive regime.

Taking the medium's experience at face value is work in progress and is what set the film *A Família do Capitão Gervásio* (Captain Gervasio's Family, 2013/2014) in motion. It is a collaboration with Kasper Akhøj and was shot on several locations in Brazil thousands of miles apart from each other, though it revolves around a Spiritist community in Palmelo, a small dusty town of 2,000 inhabitants in the interior of Goiás (Brazil). Half of the city's inhabitants are psychic mediums who hold day jobs as teachers and civil servants and partake in daily rituals of psychic healing. In this community, spirits intervene, teach and transform the material world.

The Spiritists in Palmelo practice what is known as 'the magnetic chain', a legacy from the German physician Franz Mesmer, the founder of Spiritism Allan Kardec and the French botanist François Deleuze. In Palmelo, the magnetic chain is used for the treatment of several forms of illness, including psychiatric illness, and the film's subtext is indicative of how such practices came into conflict with official movements toward mental hygiene and the codes of 'madness' inflicted by modernisation.

A psychiatric sanatorium was established in Palmelo early on. Later, the sanatorium was closed by governmental inspectors, who ruled that care could not consist of magnetic passes only. The sanatorium has reopened, and contemporary Spiritists state that during curing sessions someone is always being treated, even if it is only the medium.

The film refers to a map drawn by a Spiritist woman in Palmelo, charting twenty astral cities hovering above the whole of the Brazilian territory. In the manner of Xavier's widely read *Nosso Lar*, it accounts for astral cities in the vicinity of earthly cities where the recently deceased learn and work. Cities like those on Earth, but infinitely more perfect. These are splendid visions of modernity, in which governors, ministers and endless secretaries are viewed as benign agents of infinite wisdom. Yet to reduce this to a fantasy of progress and urbanisation is to overlook that the town appears absorbed in a radical project under a mainstream guise – a communal effort of psychic rescuing.

"Techno Casa – a reintroduction to" is a multi-layered text that results from an exchange between Riccardo Benassi and Filipa Ramos. Benassi is the author of the Techno Casa project, a series of video essays that reflect on the ongoing impact of technology on everyday life. Filipa Ramos is the English translator of the Techno Casa texts, originally written in Italian. Together they twisted the function of the Microsoft Word reviewing pane to establish an articulated dialogue that comments and interferes with the original text while preserving its readability. The different colours of the text correspond to the various interventions: black stands for the original scrolling script of the Techno Casa video, [blue](#) to Filipa Ramos's additions and comments and [red](#) to Riccardo Benassi's reactions. Considering that technology is constantly conditioning the way in which we write and correspond with one another, what they decided to do was to take the best of the current available resources and use a Word document as a messaging service.

Techno Casa – a reintroduction to (Word version)

Bricks as Bits. That is to say: the final [victory of objects](#) is revealed in the total disappearance of each [object](#). Mobile phones have replaced design in mediating our relation with the surrounding space. All the tools that surrounded us have [dematerialised](#). [They became transferable from one place to the other independently of the necessity that we may have of them. We now carry a significant number of appliances without knowing if they will be needed or not: just in case. Is it the counterpart of the fear of not being reachable?](#) To stay alive – and to survive the digital – objects have become invisible and are often processed in their own narratives. The total PowerPointisation of any discourse between (for instance) human beings is the meta-narrative that a laptop offers of itself. [Imageless conversations are becoming more and more rare. Why use words and articulate abstract descriptions of things when the image in your pocket offers a miniaturised phantom of your vision? Advertising \(marketing\) has taught us that a picture is worth a thousand words. However, we underestimate that the alleged elitism of written and oral language – to which we are admitted in the condition of knowing its code – also concerns the world of images. Image arrives to the aid of those human beings that worry about the idea that belonging to a minority is socially deplorable. A useful exercise to dispel the myth that a picture is worth a thousand words might be that of writing, listing all the thousand words it refers to... impossible. While a word – especially the spoken, audible word – is certainly worth a million images \(certainly more than 24 per second\). Actually, humans – dowers of wifi – allowed the wave to propagate from objects to furniture, so that even the very idea of decor was reorganised. The military wing of the digital revolution was the transformation of every room into an office, in short: the complete officialisation of the indoor. \[Considering that the most radical sleep-enduring experiments are carried out with military purposes, office and officer seem to be two distorted images of the same object. If it is true that war is the continuation of politics by other means, it is also true that bureaucracy is the continuation of war in peacetime. And if every room becomes an office, a place for work, does this mean the becoming office of the bedroom accommodates a labouring sleep? Under these circumstances – in which almost every sphere of our being has been capitalised and turned into potential forms of profit-making – sleep is no longer capable of performing its evading duties and is controlled by something other than itself: tools to analyse our sleep patterns. Would this be the upmost assumption of a biological ineptitude, or, instead, should we envisage it as the naturalisation of the machine?\]\(#\) \[Basically, I'm more productive when I'm not myself.\]\(#\) What seems clear is that modular office furniture – now present in every homely homelimo – is widespread and has turned into common heritage the choice of diplomacy as the only way of life. But we should not consider decor and architecture as two separate entities, even when we are led to consider](#)

Filipa Ramos
Victory over what?

Riccardo Benassi
Over subjects

Filipa Ramos
That is nice. And yet, isn't the victory of objects over subjects a natural condition of their ontology? Won't objects always win over subjects? The object is that which is able to object (thus to disagree, go against), while the subject is prone to be influenced by – subjected to – external factors. The former can say no, can oppose itself to something, while the nature of latter is to be conditioned.

Riccardo Benassi
The power of conditioning without being – or – the natural condition of objects' ontology expressed through a stroboscopic fading out.

Riccardo Benassi
The apparition of an image in a conversation between two persons is the manifestation of the presence of a third speaker who appears all of a sudden: technology that is the vehicle for communication and all the humanity engaged in its use.

save the robots / internet

A conversation between Filipa Ramos and Riccardo Benassi

the mind and the body as two separate entities (and even when the only prison that we are able to accept is the one that we have drafted for ourselves). Architecture is also facing the digital – considering skyscrapers, one might say that it surely does so with its head on. All our architecture has become a large system of display with variable content. This is particularly clear in Berlin, from where I'm writing – observing the Potsdamerplatzification of Schöneberg – and the transformation of the [Tempelhof Airport into a park area destined for bird-watching. Yes, we are watching the same birds whose weeks of sleepless flights during the migration period have inspired the utopia of a sleepless humanity. The image of the swallow on the road sign indicating the location of bird-watching seems the image of the airplane drawn on the road sign pointing to the airport. And what unites the two places – in spite of the change of function – is the presence of a watchtower.](#) The conversion of the former industrial spaces offers the set to these flashbacks: the old industry – that which produces material objects – moves into geographic areas with cheaper manpower, and the spaces that remain – once conceived to produce – become spaces of presentation, exhibition and sale. Many museums are an integral part of this process, which starts with the assumption of the economic sphere of the creative storytelling (and not vice-versa) of an economic determination of art. [The conversion of former industrial sites into cultural venues cannot be a mere exercise of adaptation. The functionality of the former sites remains in the cracks of their structure and is an all-too visible presence that traverses the reconfigured building. The industrial site and the cultural site are not to be considered an evolution or a regression of the same frame but two sides of the same Bitcoin.](#) As, you might say, the symbolic value of the product – and not its exchange value – is the main source of profit. And the fact that we call it virtual economy does not surely presuppose that it is transparent. On the contrary: it is visibly trying to get rid of architecture with consolidated methods, such as outsourcing and zero-stock... Just in time for the colonisation of every moment. Architects are manipulators of symbols and architecture is an interface that desperately asks for content: it wants to be semanticised by our love of being humans. If we pay attention, there are some vertical surfaces that we are willing to recognise as barriers or walls, provided they offer power outlets for recharging the battery of our portable interfaces. And in doing so, through empathy, architecture survives. Survives thanks to its inert materials, which are all but inert even if we always call them inert. The predisposition of certain materials to accommodate moulds, mosses and lichens is there to remind us that there is life in the brick, and that for every season there is a different kind of sweat. [This is the incarnation of the final victory of objects over subjects: architecture, in order to survive, disappeared. What remains is its support function. Architecture turned into subject, dutifully ready to be impregnated by an exogenous life that becomes its own.](#)

Riccardo Benassi
After one year observing this phenomenon I discovered the true function of birds: the airport park seems destined to host new buildings for private apartments (but citizens created a – very successful – petition to keep the public green space).

Riccardo Benassi
The only possible regression is demolition. Not by chance Benito Mussolini – referring to the institutional dictatorship reserved to the opening of a new construction site – replaced the sentence "laying of the first stone" ("la posa della prima pietra") with the sentence "groundbreaking" ("il primo colpo di piccone")

Riccardo Benassi
I like the idea of the two sides of the same Bitcoin, but I'm scared to think about the two sides of the same Coinye (Coinye – formerly Coinye West – is a new virtual currency similar to Bitcoin and inspired by the rapper Kanye West. West filed a trademark infringement lawsuit against its creators that lead to the abandonment of the project.)



[gwangju]
Home Fires: Jessica Morgan
Channels the Talking Heads
by Kate Sutton

The Tate Modern curator stokes the embers of recent history in a biennial themed around productive destruction

The Gwangju Biennale in South Korea is one of those events that usually can only exist in the hopeful idealism of grant-application mission statements: an exhibition that is state-supported, eagerly awaited and religiously attended. In an era when the so-called Biennial Boom has left much of the international contemporary art audience cynical (not to mention stuck with hefty bills for imported artists and extravagant programmes, both of which often only begrudgingly acknowledge the local community), the Gwangju Biennale is rooted in the conviction that art can still *mean* something. The project was founded as a kind of ritual commemoration of one of the city's most prominent and personal tragedies: on 18 May 1980, students who had gathered in peaceful protest of an increasingly authoritarian regime were gunned down in the streets. The Biennale honours those students by providing the very thing they gave their lives for: a public forum for a free exchange of ideas, expression and creativity.

For its tenth edition, the Gwangju Biennale enlisted Tate Modern curator (and ascending director of the Dia Art Foundation) Jessica Morgan, who delivered a concentrated wallop with *Burning Down the House*. Wisely resisting the temptation to spread out into the city, the curator confined her exhibition to the Biennale Hall, reducing distraction and maximising momentum. The resulting exhibition was rough and rollicking fun, all in keeping with its namesake Talking Heads track.

And yet, while the curator clearly intended to ride the good vibes of the art-punk anthem, the theme and its message of light-hearted destruction sat uneasily with some of the local audience, who voiced concern that the commemoration of a violent uprising might be confused with the endorsement of a new one. To quell these anxieties, Morgan relied on theatrical techniques, thus echoing one of Gwangju's own strategies during the time of the uprising, when the city's informal street theatre played a crucial role as an instrument of political expression and community-building (a fact explored by Ei Arakawa and Inza Lim in their commission for the Biennale.) And even in some of the exhibition's more gruelling works – such as the collection of walking sticks handcarved by a massacre survivor in Minouk Lim's *Mr. Eui Jin Chai and the 1,000 Canes* (2014) – Morgan manages to keep the balance towards theatricality – if not neutralising the weight of heavy, hurtful truths, than at least providing some distance.

The entire exhibition features a backdrop of wallpaper printed with a pixellated motif of smoke and flames, produced by the design studio El Ultimo Grito. Stage effects begin in the very first room, which is lit only by the flickering red light of Jack Goldstein's *Burning Window* (1977–2002). The darkness continues into the next room, where projections of video documentation of Lee Bul's early performances accompany several of the artist's costumes, "soft sculptures" strung up like cocoons from the ceiling.

Over the five unfolding galleries, Morgan develops her theme of productive destruction as it plays out against architectures both social and physical. Often, the combination of works spawn mini-narratives, such as the coupling of Young Soo Kim's self-portraits undergoing (staged) torture and James Richards's *Untitled (The Screens)* (2014), a set of four syncopated slideshows shuffling through images instructing trainee special-effects make-up artists in the imitation of burns, bruises, scars and open wounds. Ashes and charcoal figure in pieces by Cornelia Parker, Otto Piene, Yves Klein, Eduardo Basualdo and even Mircea Suciu, but the most stirring works tend to be those where the concept of burning is less literal. Jonathas de Andrade's eight-minute video, *The Uprising* (2012), is downright thrilling, as it follows a horse-cart race through the streets of Recife in Brazil. (Once the primary engine of growth and development in the city, the animals are now banned from its streets.) Equally mesmerising is Anand Patwardhan's five-minute video, *We Are Not Your Monkeys* (1993), which features a drum-circle poet voicing his objections to the caste system, as he leads his fellow "untouchables" in the eponymous cry of revolt. Taking a more subtle approach, in *Speech at the Edge of the World* (2014), Xiangqian Hu adopts the persona of a motivational speaker to deliver a rousing graduation address to a group of students in the artist's hometown of Leizhou, in the Guangdong Province. Although the students' education is conducted in Mandarin, Hu expressly chooses to speak in the local dialect, creating a disjunction with the cosmopolitan presumptions of modern 'success'. After all, not every revolution takes place to the beat of a drum; some just need an inflection.

Artists Sharon Hayes and Carlos Motta both sought out direct participation from the Gwangju community for their respective commissions, multi-component projects that challenged social expectations and the notion of normative behaviour. The resulting interviews, archives and videos are brought into dialogue with Birgit Jürgenssen's 1970s' era *Housewife* drawings (including one particularly compelling image of a woman muffled by her own strappy sandal), Nil Yalter's documentation of her former partner's sex change and Lionel Wendt's gorgeously fluid photographs. The latter flank the woven hemp sculptures of Mrinalini Mukherjee. Titled *Arboreal Enchantment*, 1991–1992, Mukherjee's forms strike up a kind of chrysalis narrative with the Lee Bul costumes, suggesting that whatever was gestating in those first galleries seems to have emerged.

The final hall is dedicated to a single work by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, *M.2062 (Fitzcarraldo)* (2014). The viewer enters a dark, empty room, only to confront a

holograph of the artist in character as the eponymous Klaus Kinski from Werner Herzog's 1982 film. The figure haunts the biennale, a kind of ghost in the machine, whose mutterings and howls occasionally merge with strains from French electronic musician Joakim's re-working of the title song, blasting from a speaker in the adjoining foyer.

The real phantoms, however, are in the front plaza, where Minouk Lim's *Navigation ID* (2014) gathers together the bones of victims of massacres who never received a proper burial. Unlike the families of the students killed in the Gwangju Uprising, relatives of these victims must endure the stigma of being related to a potential communist and are to this day barred from positions in civil service. For the opening performance of the exhibition, Lim had these mourners bring bones of the still unburied bodies to two portable containers placed in the centre of the square – in an unsettlingly evocative proximity to Sterling Ruby's set of working, wood-burning stoves. The skeletons are clearly visible through the windows of each container, a daily reminder of a society's debts still unpaid. Ultimately, it seems that Morgan's call to "burn down the house" isn't so much a summons to raze the roof as a reminder of the still smouldering embers.

PREVIOUS SPREAD:
Carol Christian Poell, *Squatter*, 2010
installed within Urs Fischer, *38 E. 1st St.*, 2014

OPPOSITE PAGE:
TOP (FROM LEFT): Brenda Fajardo, *Crossroads*, 2003
Lee Bul, *Wearable Sculptures*, 2014
MIDDLE: Ei Arakawa and Inza Lim, *The Unheroed Theatre (Character Studies with Gwangdae, Shinmyoung, Tobaki, the Fictitious Aseupalteu)*, 2014
BOTTOM (FROM LEFT): Eko Nugroho, various works
installation view, 2014
Minouk Lim, *Navigation ID*, 2014
ALL PHOTOS: Gwangju Biennale 2014
© Stefan Altenburger



[athens]

Museum as Memory Palace: A Review of the National Archaeological Museum

by Raleigh Werberger

What if a museum were a place where every object could give rise to memories, each rippling out as in a pool, echoes of each past intersecting endlessly with all the others?

“lots of statues and jugs”

“Wow! and wear comfortable shoes!”

“Took me 2h!”

“Good way to lose 8 euros”

“Wow, its worth a visit & spend 2 to 3 hrs if u r an art lover...”

“A nice collection of pottery and homoeroticism”

(from reviews on *Tripadvisor.com*)

I am standing in front of the famous Death Mask of Agamemnon – one of the trove of grave goods from Schliemann’s excavation of Mycenae that rekindled global interest in the *Iliad* as an historical, not just a literary, text. In a sense, I have waited my entire life to see this.

One of the first ‘serious’ books I can remember reading was about Schliemann’s work at Troy and Mycenae. I have no idea why I looked at it. But I do remember that mask on the cover. It spurred me to go on to read the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and anything else about the world of the ancient Greeks I could get my hands on. This mask is intimately connected to my love of history, what I read, why I teach.

I am staring at this mask, which I have seen so many times before, but never in its actual materiality. I want an epiphany, some electric thrill, but nothing is coming. I walk away from the case feeling oddly disappointed. No, not disappointed, but apathetic.

How is this possible? Does an artefact from the past lose its power once it’s removed from its original place? Does the reproduction of the object further decay the impact of the original?

Put more concretely, does the disinterment of the Artemisian Bronze, for example, and its subsequent placement on the ground floor of the National Archaeological Museum mean we will never have any real understanding of the meaning or the power of the statue at the time of its creation?

Does the profusion of cheap 5-euro copies of the bronze in every gift shop on the way to the exhibit mean

that people won’t be viscerally affected when they see the genuine article?

If the answer to any of these criticisms is “yes”, then one wonders what the point of the National Archaeological Museum is.

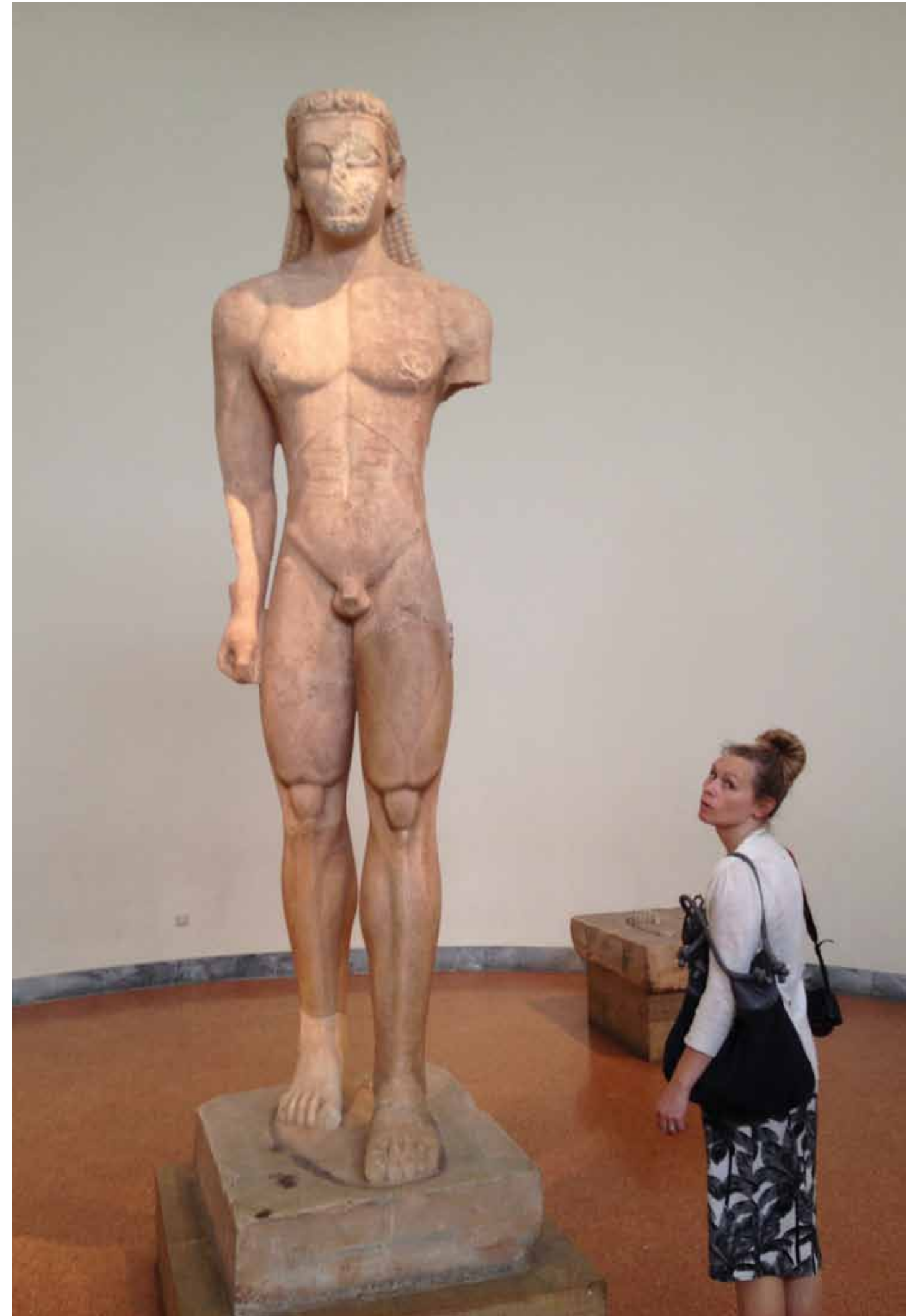
For me, it’s simple. I’m in Athens, and I’m obsessed with ancient history – the more ancient the better. In my capacity as a failed historian, a visit to any of the world’s great cities also means a trip to a history museum.

Given that I have spent over a quarter of a century trying to imagine myself back into Homer’s world, my wife gave in with good grace to the inevitable now that we had come to Athens. To make it interesting, however, I was challenged to view the Museum as an art space, and myself as a flâneur. I needed a refresher on the subject – it’s been a shockingly long time since I last read Walter Benjamin – but I took the coward’s way out and thumbed through John Berger instead.

Berger viewed art museums with suspicion, writing that art is “exploit[ed] to glorify the present social system and its priorities”, to support hierarchies that rely on inequality to fuel the machine. Yet, he also claimed that looking at art “clos[es] the distance in time” between the creation of a piece and “one’s own act of looking at it”. We cannot escape the fact that what we see when we look at art “depends on what we expect of art, and that in turn depends [...] upon how we have already experienced the meaning of paintings through reproductions”.

Consider the British Museum, which has comparatively little of British history on display, but plenty of everyone else’s, and all of them are those well-known bits we see on book covers, history texts and the occasional Dan Brown novel. How they all got there goes unmentioned (tactfully), but the message is clear: “We are your aesthetic arbiters, and we’ll hold on to your past for you, lest you break it accidentally.”

Its artefacts, occasionally loaned, as with King Tut’s travelling exhibit, or more often purchased or stolen outright, as with the Elgin Marbles, usually occupy the centre of a room dedicated solely to them, and one approaches them as one would a fetish object – or as most American tourists do, with a sense that they matter somehow, even if the reason for that is only dimly understood. The feeling



one gets is that here is some holy object that must be treated with veneration, as though some of its mystical properties will transfer to the viewer. Or, as I heard one woman say to her husband, “David, isn’t that a famous thing?”

If the story of the British Museum is “We are the sum total of the world’s civilisations”, what is the story of the National Archaeological Museum?

The first challenge in answering that is addressing the sheer scale of the collection. It’s almost too much to handle, really. Even accounting for the pillaging of Greece’s past, as far back as the Romans, there are an enviable amount of artefacts remaining. We managed to see only one floor, and only half of that with any real thoroughness.

After the initial shock of seeing life-sized Cycladic figures, I found myself starting to wander past entire cases of the thin, alien-like sculptures lining the walls. Pots, shards of pots, totemic figures, weapons, armour and funeral attire, glass boxes crammed with grave goods... Each island group is represented separately and well appointed with text. My God, so much text... I stumbled across the aforementioned Death Mask of Agamemnon, boar’s tusk helmets, and urns painted with warriors holding tower shields. Yet, rather than exhilarated, I felt merely tired.

I began to think about the layout of the Museum and the narrative it was trying to tell me.

That of the sculpture collection, which began with seventh-century *kouroi* and ended with the Severan Dynasty, was obvious, as it conformed to every art-history class I ever took. It is a story of how Greek sculptors attempted to capture a natural form of movement, gradually over time their work becoming the recognisably Classical representation we all know from school, and ending with its final dissipation during the Roman Empire.

But what does the Neolithic/Bronze Age collection tell us? In the absence of signifiers apart from the geographical and chronological information, I floated free of context. Was the message solely: “Wow, a lot of history sure happened here?” Large boards crammed with text accompanied each grouping, but I grew reluctant to read them as I moved from room to room. At any rate, they existed to the side of the artefacts, rather than among them, so that it took an act of will to move one’s eyes from the contents of each case to the text. As for the objects themselves, I was

reminded of the way kids organise their baseball-card collections – by year or by team and occasionally, if one has an artist’s soul, by colour.

In every review of the Museum, people write about “viewing treasures”. About seeing objects of great beauty. About seeing pieces of the past they had read about in school. They describe themselves as “awestruck” or having their “breath taken away”. But what happens apart from that? We are consuming experiences that are prearranged for us. Collecting seems meant to make it easier for us to “view treasures” rather than challenging us to think more deeply about what we are seeing.

Where was the hand of the curator, evidence of a contemporary mind at work in the collections? I found it in the Antikythera exhibit, a cross-section of luxury goods found together in the wreckage of a ship bound for the Roman fine-arts market. I was being consciously manipulated by the video of divers bringing up treasures from the ocean floor, the dramatic music that accompanied the film and the battered relics glowing in the darkened room, but I appreciated the thrill, nonetheless. This was a tour through someone’s moment of triumph.

The jewel of the room is the well known, and completely reconstructed, Antikythera Youth. But more striking was the statue of the Young Wrestler. Its body, rising up out of a crouch, is half decomposed by calcium-eating sea creatures but is made all the more powerful because of it. I could imagine the diver pulling on a

rotted stump and from the sand there emerges... a perfect human face.

And in a room all to its own, we found the Antikythera mechanism, replete with 3-D digital recreations, footage of reconstructed models, maps of the solar system – all arranged to help us understand the ravaged little computer for what it was... but speaking more to the deep excitement that has animated mathematicians, astronomers and engineers to decipher it.

Only the Antikythera Youth, reassembled and polished, would find a place on its own in one of the great history museums of the world, but these other rusted and chewed-looking artefacts had become recognisably human creations, whereas the Cycladic violin women here on the right, trapped in their glass boxes, devoid of context, seemed utterly alien – or worse, a hoax.



Is the past a linear progression of cause and effect, or is that a convenient fiction, a consequence of the ways our brains are wired? How many different stories could be told apart from the chronological and site-specific? Perhaps the artefacts could be grouped together by function *across*, or even *despite* geographies, to show variations and continuities in the ways communities solved daily problems. *This* is how we have solved the challenges of transporting water and grain, placating the gods, capturing a fleeting moment of joy in a lasting form... the small things that matter as much or more than Pythagoras’s theorem, and which bring us closer to imagining the lives of people so long ago. Thus we approach empathy, and perhaps there’s nothing more important to learn than that.

To take a broader view, perhaps local cultures matter less than the connections between them, or with the rest of the ancient world. Is human civilisation the sum of the weapons and armour on display in museums, or of the aeons of peaceful trade we know existed prior to recorded history? We believe the ancient world to be a bloody place, and we assess the age of archaeological sites by the carbon in their destruction layers, but Achilles’ famous shield was decorated by quiet scenes of farming, pasturage and wine-making, not just combat. The frescoes of Knossos and Akrotiri are famed for their depictions of dancing, swimming and feasting. Why is it so hard to imagine the long dead had complex aspirations and curiosities no different from our own?

Perhaps the artefacts matter less than the language, culture and ideas that flowed throughout the Mediterranean? Should we be more concerned with the growth of technology that the objects reveal – technologies that tell us something about ourselves and the way we interact with the world as it is now? Are we different because we have iPhones and iPads, or are we just using different technologies for the same old purposes? Is there something we can learn from ancient immigration to help us navigate the present? Did globalisation have the same connotations then as it does now? I think of Juvenal, writing scathing commentaries about the Greeks and “Asiatics” pouring into Imperial Rome, but also of the central role Greeks played in every bureaucratic and economic function of the Empire.

I would like to ask the curators of the Museum, “Are we are supposed to be viewing a moment in time, several thousand years ago, or should we be more concerned with the usage the present makes of the past?” For example, is it helpful to be told how disinterred Cycladic art went on to influence art movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? Think of Brancusi, Modigliani and Henry Moore, who returned art to its essential forms specifically by aping Bronze Age sculpture.

I think too of the unlearning I had to do when I discovered the degree to which Arthur Evans and the subsequent Modernists criticised Western values by purposefully creating a matriarchal, peace-loving Minoan culture in the ruins of Knossos. Being a history teacher, I always tell my students how assiduously Nazi archaeologists, hoping to prove German antiquity, planted chemically

aged or altered relics in the soil in order to triumphantly ‘find’ them later. I do this partly because it’s funny, but also because it speaks to what Nietzsche referred to as the abuse of history.

Don’t get me wrong – it is an incredible collection. It is in every way one of the world’s great museums. Yet, without a sense of that connection between past and present, one is tempted to say, leaving the museum, “Boy, the Greeks had a great civilisation, once...” But what if a museum could be a memory palace – a place where every object gives rise to memories, each memory rippling out as in a pool, echoes of each past intersecting endlessly with all the others... It could be a place where visitors can make their own associations and construe their own meanings. A place of creativity and active thought, rather than passive reception.

If, as Faulkner said, the past isn’t dead, it isn’t even past, then we can see modern Greece as a living breathing continuum from its ancient roots to the present. People still have to figure out how to meet their basic needs, they still need to propitiate the spirits, they still strive to communicate their feelings and thoughts. Ideas and goods still circulate and culture embraces some, rejects others. People argue about politics and sports. Someone’s reading a newspaper at a sidewalk cafe.

All the greatness we habitually ascribe to Classical Athens is still here at large in the city today. The form is different, but the content is very much the same. This is an awareness that Greece – reeling economically, characterised as a default risk by the houses of international finance, and viewed ignorantly by outsiders as lacking a proper work ethic – deserves.

PREVIOUS SPREAD: A kouros, c. 7th century BCE

LEFT: *The Wrestler*, c. 1st century BCE
All photos taken in the National Archaeological Museum by Raleigh Werberger

[berlin]

We'll Always Be Eager for the Next Museum to be Built

by Michelangelo Corsaro

From historical fetishism to corporate progress, the impulses behind recent urban planning and the rapid development of Berlin are the focus of the city's 8th Biennale

The 2003 German film *Goodbye Lenin* tells the story of a young man taking care of his mother, a fervent follower of the communist regime of East Germany who goes into a coma during the time of reunification. After she regains consciousness, her son tries to hide the transition to capitalism from her – given her fragile condition, the shock of the news would be a danger to her health. And so, going to extraordinary lengths, he attempts to dupe her by pouring capitalist products into communist packaging, filming fake news reports and maintaining a flawless Soviet-style outfit. However, as the winds from the West blow stronger and stronger, the truth is eventually uncovered. Never mind, because the poor communist mother dies shortly afterwards, disappearing just like her dear communist pickles that vanished from the supermarkets a few months before.

Historical transitions are a serious thing: since the last time Germany won a football World Cup, the city of Berlin has been through a series of transformations that in any other European capital would be difficult even to imagine. Twenty-five years after the end of communism, the city is now ready to sit at the grown ups' table with the other art capitals that boast rapid development and rising real-estate prices. And despite the fact that this might be considered the least painful metamorphosis experienced by the city of Berlin in the last century, it doesn't seem any less necessary or unavoidable than the Coca-Cola billboards being raised along Karl-Marx-Allee at the beginning of the 1990s. As the curator of the 8th Berlin Biennale Juan A. Gaitán notes, recent developments in the city display rather interesting tendencies, with the disavowal of the twentieth century corresponding to a reinforced use of historical discourse to validate cultural hegemonies. It could be argued, however, that speaking of development in Berlin means also to speak of the unconscious drive for emancipation, the commitment to reputation and the appetite for the consumption of material – and immaterial – commodities. And Berlin is growing very quickly indeed, at such a speed that psychological repression comes easier and language is redundant – we decode tags, keywords and a swollen stream of emotions.

The 8th Berlin Biennale was steered in a different direction to the previous 2012 edition, *Forget Fear*, curated by Artur Żmijewski. The idea proposed by Żmijewski of “the artist as an activist” proved ineffective in a city that already seems to have forgotten all its fears and moved on from its



Andreas Angelidakis, *Crash Pad*, 2014
installation view, 8th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art
Courtesy of Andreas Angelidakis and The Breeder, Athens/Monaco
Photo by Uwe Walter



flying rumours

VISUAL ARTS

troubled past, transforming into a major hub for the cultural and creative industries. In other words, what used to be only tentative guesswork has been turned once and for all into an axiom: art *can* transform a half-empty, half-ex-communist city into an appealing playground for corporate investors and Silicon Valley goers.

The exhibition curated by Juan A. Gaitán was more organic to the character of the hosting city than its controversial predecessor. The 8th Berlin Biennale focused on the city's recent development, inquiring into the felicitous urban planning poised between a made-in-the-nineteenth-century historical fetishism and the futuristic push for corporate progress. The choice of venues seemed to acknowledge an end to the narratives that pictured Berlin as the city of boundless empty available space. With all those lofty warehouses now domesticated into sleek apartments or offices, the Biennale was instead shared between different institutional venues. The first, the KW, is the traditional venue of the Berlin Biennale, a rather familiar environment for artists who have been assigned to these spaces. The second, the Museen Dahlem – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, is the Ethnological Museum of Berlin, one of the largest in the world and a popular Sunday destination for young families. The third, Haus am Waldsee, was built in the 1920s as a bourgeois private villa and was turned into an exhibition space as early as 1946. Spanning these three locations, the exhibition seemed to be a display itself of three major expressions of cultural industry: the contemporary art institution, the historical museum and the pocket-sized art space.

A few notorious names lived up to expectations with clever, sharp works. Andreas Angelidakis, for instance, landed in Berlin slightly ahead of the Biennale opening with his *Crash Pad* (a sort of extra venue or addition to the KW). Presented as “a thank-you note [...] to the German idea of antiquity”, this multi-purpose room articulated a complex array of references to the construction of modern Greece. Decorated with polystyrene classical columns, a careful selection of books and folkloric carpets handmade in the Greek countryside, the pleasant environment summoned up the conflicting components that haunt the identity of modern Greece, well beyond what might seem the case from simplified Eurocentric stereotypes. While for a foreigner it is in fact utterly impossible to distinguish a Greek coffee from a Turkish coffee, the carpets alluded to the troubled neighbourhood relationship between Greece and Turkey and the village culture of the peasant guerrilla fighters who defeated the Ottoman army in 1822. The Western aspect of Greek identity was also referred to in terms of its cultural and economical ties with the European continent: the invention of the idea of classical antiquity and an early joint-venture bailout of the Greek economy in 1893 by France, England and Germany.

In the Museen Dahlem, the work of Rosa Barba stood out as noteworthy, even in comparison with the terrific ethnological collection. A big cinema-machine consisting of a massive projector-cum-looper cast onto a large screen her film *Subconscious Societies*: an endless display of post-apocalyptic landscapes in which human constructions struggle with nature for their status as artefacts. The work arguably established

the most interesting dialogue with the museum's collection, suspended as it was between the narration of a collective subterranean subjectivity and a representation of a future in which humanity has gone underground.

An intelligent reflection on the history of Turkey was on display at Haus am Waldsee. *Ezan Çılgınlıkları* is a sound sculpture by Slavs and Tatars replicating a large *rablé* (or stand for holy books) with two embedded speakers playing a digitalised *a cappella* version of the Turkish call to prayer. The work provocatively highlights the conflicting forces that characterised modernisation in Turkey through an original take on the language revolution, or Dil Devrimi, during which Islam and modern Turkish identity did not always see eye to eye.

In addition, the list of participating artists ticked all the boxes, retracing common routes of contemporary art maps well known among curators, researchers and collectors: Otobong Nkanga, Julieta Aranda, Tacita Dean, Mario García Torres... some of them appeared to be in more perfect shape than others, but, most importantly, they were all present. As was Anri Sala with the video *Ravel Ravel Unravel*; the piece was still as mesmerising as it had been the year before at the 55th Venice Biennale's French Pavilion.

Insofar as a biennial displays the city as much as it displays the art, the exhibition followed a series of tenets that seem to be in line with the branding of the city. The side effects appeared here and there. For instance, in the choice of the Museen Dalhem as a venue for the installation of a Wolfgang Tillmans vitrine showing a display of Nike trainers: just a few rooms away, visitors could enjoy, housed in a similar vitrine, a plastic replica of a döner kebab, supposedly meant to proudly represent Turkish culture as part of the museum's ethnological collection. And yet, as long as Berlin is still booming on a sort of artsy doping, we'll always be eager for the next museum to be built. On the Haus am Waldsee website, there's the following statement: “Given the changes in the historical situation since 1989 in Berlin, the connections with the wider international art scene are getting closer and closer. Since the middle of the 90s the German capital has become one of the most exciting art centres as well as a magnet for creative people worldwide. Artists from all countries and continents as well as from other parts of Germany are moving to Berlin.” A true story, and in fact too good to be true. Because in Berlin “the intersection between larger historical narratives and individuals' lives” that the Biennale claims to explore seems to have melted into an Orwellian state of orthodoxy: “Orthodoxy means not thinking – not needing to think. Orthodoxy is unconsciousness.” (George Orwell, 1984).

Goshka Macuga, *Preparatory Notes for a Chicago Comedy*, 2014, mixed media dimensions variable, installation view
Courtesy of Goshka Macuga; Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York; Kate MacGarry, London; Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle, Munich
Photos by Michelangelo Corsaro

[são paulo]

The Things that Do Exist

by Misal Adnan Yıldız

How to talk about the 31st São Paulo Biennial



Hanging around with Nilbar Güreş during the installation of her works as part of the biennial

Charles Esche is a great strategist. As curator of the most recent São Paulo Biennial, entitled *How to Talk about Things that Don't Exist*, he has managed not only to bring together a great team and, through these curatorial channels, an excellent line-up of artists, but also to pave the way for discussions and artists' gatherings, which have created a perception of the exhibition as a 'political' one. We live in times where no biennial opening occurs without a petition or protest, and in the first days of the São Paulo Biennial, hot on the heels of the Sydney Biennial, where artists had protested the institutional framework, a petition signed by most of the participating artists in Brazil asked the organisers not to use the financial support from Israel, which made up a little of the biennial budget. As the artists were producing and installing their work in São Paulo, Israel's army was bombing civilian areas in Gaza. And this summer, Israel lost the psychological war in many cities, from New York to Berlin, where there were protests, many of them attended by the Jewish community and Israeli citizens. So yes, the world has been changing, socially and politically, and with it, our perspectives are shifting too.

During the final days of the installation, most artists declined private dinners organised by collectors in favour of participating in public discussions, in which Esche and his team actively took part, shaping the potential of the debates. Perhaps for the first time in biennial history, a protest against the biennial institution and its structure happened in collaboration with the curators themselves.

I have no idea whether the 31st São Paulo Biennial is political or not. It certainly achieves a working dialogue

with the exhibition space, Oscar Niemeyer's Cicillo Matarazzo Pavilion. It is the first time a biennial has taken place at the pavilion since its legendary architect died, and his simultaneous absence and omnipresence pervade. It is also without doubt one of the most queer exhibitions since the 12th Istanbul Biennial, which was curated by Adriano Pedrosa and Jens Hoffman. Although there is no special section like their *Untitled (Ross)*, there are strong installations related to gender issues and queer identity throughout the exhibition. One of these, which could be also contextualised within the changing Latin World, is the presentation of multi-layered biographical research entitled *Life's Timeline / Transvestite Museum of Peru*, organised by one of the most interesting young curators of our time, Miguel Lopez. A collection of texts, objects, notes, documents, documentation, ephemera and more from Peruvian drag queen Giuseppe Campuzano (Lima, 1969–2013) takes on a complex form as a walk in a conceptual spiral, reformulating the questions surrounding a certain history of gender construction. This is a good example of the show's decision-making process in general: the curatorial team of the biennial stated that they were interested in inviting projects – rather than artists or individual works – that aim to contextualise a social and panoramic view of the mystical, the unknown and the spiritual.

Another re-discovery – in the context of queer art in Brazil – was Brazilian artist Hudinilson Jr, whose work includes sculptural forms, autobiographical drawings and collages. In the last three decades, especially since the seventies, his art has investigated the transformation of gender and



Reading Clarice Lispector in São Paulo

All photos by Misal Adnan Yıldız

identity within a militaristic and post-militaristic context, with certain references to masculinity. Nilbar Güreş's work, from her sculpture to her photography, reflects on the cultural and political climate of the city. A combination of new pieces produced during her residency in São Paulo and existing works sets up comparisons between the São Paulo and the Anatolian landscapes and the social transformations that have taken place in each. These pieces appear amongst data-based, large-scale installations reminiscent of the late nineties such as *The Modern School*, a collaboration between Archivo F.X., an institution working with an archive of images from Spanish modernity and the artist Pedro G. Romero.

Film has a strong presence at the biennial, and it is a privilege to see José Val del Omar's film works supported by a sound system of such excellent quality. The Spanish director has a unique language in relation to the history of filmmaking: most of the works shown in the exhibition date from the early fifties and include striking moments of abstraction and subversion. The 16-mm film projection and sculptural objects produced as seating proposals for the film by Kasper Akhøj and Tamar Guimarães operate as a site-specific work along with Mark Lewis's large-scale video projections that reference the building's architecture and urban life. I personally enjoyed the new chapters of *The Incidental Insurgents* by Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme since last year's Istanbul Biennial. And Yael Bartana's *Inferno* (2013) has been attracting huge audiences – is her next stop Hollywood?

There are striking pieces from Otobong Nkanga, Dan Perjovschi, Anna Boghiguian, Wilhelm Sasnal, Tony Chakar and Walid Raad, though one might expect more abstraction in an exhibition dealing with things that don't exist – the dominant styles of the exhibition could be deemed figurative and expressive. Although many of the works are political, a collaborative film project by Armando Queiroz with Almiros Martins and Marcelo Rodrigues, a huge wall painting by Éder Oliveira and a film installation by Halil Altındere all portray males as the resisting political subject: this perhaps makes São Paulo yet another 'boyish' exhibition by Esche, likely to provoke a critique similar to that regarding his collaboration with Vasif Kortun during the Posit 9B programme at the 9th Istanbul Biennial.

One might wonder how the São Paulo Biennial would have looked had it been curated by someone – such as Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev or Anselm Franke – who has been developing research and exhibitions with similar themes for a little longer. But what makes *How to Talk about Things that Don't Exist* interesting is the ambition Esche shows in drawing on everything – from social inequality to the war in Palestine to the Messiah – as starting points for looking at the art. And as the Brazilian Clarice Lispector wrote, "Everything I do not know forms the greater part of me: this is my largesse. And with this I understand everything. The things I do not know constitute my truth."



Nilbar Güreş, *Open Phone Booth*, 2011
3-channel synchronisation video, 16:9, 33 minutes 46 seconds
Courtesy of Nilbar Güreş, Rampa (Istanbul) and Galerie Martin Janda (Vienna)

[namibia, florida]

Returning to The Villages

by Erik Blinderman and Lisa Rave

Colonialist exclusion or imprisonment?
A film compares two communities
premised on segregation
in Namibia and Florida



The Villages by Erik Blinderman and Lisa Rave, 2011

Each episode of the British science-fiction TV series *The Prisoner* follows a fairly consistent arc. The show's protagonist, a former government agent, is incarcerated in "The Village" in an undisclosed time and place without knowing the reason for his imprisonment. In each episode he attempts a novel escape from this idyllic village, fails and returns to his home away from home, itself a replica of the residence he had as a free man. In the face of his defeat, a smiling neighbour says in passing, "Be seeing you" – the Village's colloquial goodbye – followed by a gestural salute of encircling the eye between the thumb and forefinger. As the credits roll to the militaristic drum beat of the show's theme song, the agent is resigned to the fact that all of his movements are monitored and controlled: all resistance is



futile. He is Number Six, without a name and denied any sense of self-determination.

An American broadcast company has recently remade *The Prisoner*, using as a backdrop the idiosyncratic colonial architecture of Swakopmund set against the warm hues of the Namibian desert. Swakopmund, a former port colony of Germany's short-lived colonial empire, has retained much of its original architecture as a direct result of the continuing influx of German investors capitalising on the nature tourism that has been expanding in the region since the mid twentieth century. Surrounded by walls and electric fences, inhabitants are secured inside the town, forcing the others to reside in shanty towns off the grid. These marginalised communities make their living inside Swakopmund as day labourers, hotel porters and security guards, maintaining a racial divide and its architectural fantasy, brooming the streets clean of the swirling clouds of dust brought in from the impending desert's edge.

Our film, *The Villages*, attempts to reconcile two foreign landscapes as they merge into one imagined dystopian space. Operating primarily through what could be considered observation, the film moves between the coastal town of Swakopmund and a retirement community named The Villages, situated in Central Florida, United States. The latter is a sprawling suburban age-segregated community with its own boundaries continually

expanding to accommodate the growing retirement of the baby-boomer populations. The Villages has created its own form of fantasy colonialism through its decor and a type of architectural mimicry. Through the privatisation of all facets of its economy, through isolation, open segregation and a cultural homogeneity in all its glorious excesses, The Villages brings south thousands of homeowners who give up their native states, families and jobs, to live and die amongst the aged. Given the community's ultimate promises of everyday life as tourism, its novelty golf cars, social-isolation and age-exclusion policies, a private newspaper, popular music and conservative radio talk shows broadcast round the clock through every lamppost in the town square, its gates and security checkpoints, it did not feel far-fetched to draw parallels with "The Village" of *The Prisoner* series.

Both locations have the capacity to hermetically seal themselves off from the outside world and reproduce the construct of a community by openly suppressing other narratives and native histories. Our film moves between both colonies, allowing the fantasies that are inherent in each location to act as a parable for the other. Through the structural analogies of the space, through the synchronisation of image and sound, and between what could be considered acting and editing, one space is formed that can only be nameless, called simply *The Villages*.

Olaf Nicolai

flying rumours
MUSIC

Escalier du Chant

«Escalier du Chant» is an audiovisual, performative installation that was developed for the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich.

Eleven international composers were invited to write a capella songs referring to political events of current importance – events that at the time of commissioning were as unpredictable as the compositions themselves. The pieces were written continuously over the course of 2011 and staged on the last Sunday of each month, without prior announcement of the performance times. Instead of having the stage and the audience facing each other, the singers suddenly appeared, creating with their choreographed performance a presentation space in which the visitors now found themselves like actors in a play. Unlike in a concert situation, here an unmediated, transient state arises that places the bodies of those present, the audible sounds, and the spatio-temporal framework of the situation in an indeterminate, scenic configuration.

The resulting song cycle is being scenically adapted for renewed performances of «Escalier du Chant» in other places and

expanded with new compositions. Not only the topics chosen by the composers, but also their aesthetic transformations developed by the composers become virulent within this cycle, and thereby «contemporary».

Parts of «Escalier du Chant» were presented in 2011 within the Thessaloniki Biennale; for further performances in Oslo (2012) and Salzburg (2013), «Escalier du Chant» was expanded by an adaptation of a new composition written by the Norwegian composer Maja Ratkje. In October 2013, a version of «Escalier du Chant» was performed transposed to the spatial situation of the Cour Puget at the Louvre. A playbill appeared to accompany each piece with statements from the composers, information on the compositions, and excerpts from the scores.

These programs and audio samples from the songs are documented on the website www.escalierduchant.org. On the following pages, two of these documentary booklets are presented. The songs can be listened to on the website listed above.

Olaf Nicolai, January 2014

With Compositions by: Tony Conrad, Georg Friedrich Haas, Georg Katzer, Liza Lim, Samir Odeh-Tamimi, Enno Poppe, Maja Ratkje, Rolf Riehm, James Saunders, Elliott Sharp, Mika Vainio, Jennifer Walshe
Performing artists: Neue Vokalsolisten Stuttgart

Publication: Olaf Nicolai, Escalier du Chant, Spector Books, Leipzig 2013 (with all documentations) ISBN 978-3-940064-65-3

www.escalierduchant.org

Photo: Escalier du Chant, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2011) / performing artists: Neue Vokalsolisten Stuttgart, photo: Franziska Haase



**Elliott
Sharp**

**The Ballad
of Bradley
Manning**

**Escalier
du Chant**

2



The Ballad of Bradley Manning

[illegible]

Abbildung: Auszug aus der Partitur

Image: Excerpt from the score

The Ballad of Bradley Manning

Bradley E. Manning (geb. am 17.12.1987) ist ein US-amerikanischer Soldat, der im Juli 2010 der unautorisierten Vervielfältigung von US-Geheiminformationen angeklagt wurde. Er befindet sich unter schärfsten Sicherheitsvorkehrungen im Gefängnis der Marine-Corps-Basis Quantico, Virginia. Voraussichtlich im Frühjahr 2011 soll er vor dem Kriegsverbrechengericht erscheinen.

Manning war in einem Unterstützungsbataillon im Irak stationiert, wodurch er Zugang zum SIPRNet hatte – dem Secret Internet Protocol Router Network, das vom US-Verteidigungs- und Außenministerium benutzt wird, um geheime Informationen zu übermitteln. Er wurde im Mai 2010 verhaftet, nachdem Adrian Lamo, ein ehemaliger Hacker, den Behörden gemeldet hatte, dass Manning während eines Online-Chats zugeworfen habe, Material vom SIPRNet heruntergeladen und an WikiLeaks weitergeleitet zu haben. Dieses Material enthielt unter anderem das Video des Hubschrauberangriffs in Bagdad vom Juli 2007 – das sogenannte „Collateral Murder“-Video, das WikiLeaks im April 2010 veröffentlichte –, außerdem ein Video des Granat-Luftangriffs und eine große Anzahl diplomatischer Berichte.

Manning wurde nach dem Uniform Code of Military Justice angeklagt, zwischen dem 19. April 1911 und dem 27. 5. 2010 geheime Daten auf seinen Privatcomputer übertragen und nationale Sicherheitsinformationen zu einer unautorisierten Adresse weitergeleitet zu haben. Manning muss in Isolationshaft 30 Stunden pro Tag in seiner Zelle verbringen, darf dort keine körperlichen Übungen verrichten, Bettlaken und Kissen werden ihm verweigert. Er steht unter konstanter Überwachung und darf keinen direkten oder indirekten Kontakt zu den Medien herstellen. Ihm drohen bis zu 52 Jahre Haft.

WikiLeaks hat Manning nicht als die Quelle des Materials identifiziert. Unter anderem das Bradley Manning Support Network hat bis Januar 2011 über 100.000 Dollar Spenden für seine Verteidigung gesammelt. Julian Assange nannte Manning einen „beispiellosen Helden“, insoweit er vermeintlich hinter die Vorverhaftungen steckt, und sagte, er betrachte Manning als politischen Gefangenen.

Bradley E. Manning (born December 17 1987) is a United States Army soldier who was charged in July 2010 with the unauthorized disclosure of classified information. He is being held in "maximum custody" at the Marine Corps Brig, Quantico, Virginia. He is expected to face a court martial in the spring of 2011.

Manning had been assigned to a support battalion based in Iran, which gave him access to the Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNet) used by the U.S. Department of Defense and Department of State to transmit classified information. He was arrested in May 2010 after Adrian Lamo, a former computer hacker, informed the authorities that Manning had told him during an online chat, that he had downloaded material from SIPRNet and passed it to WikiLeaks. The material included the video of a July 2007 helicopter air strike in Baghdad the so-called Collateral Murder video, which WikiLeaks published in April 2010, a video of the 2009 Graini Massacre in Afghanistan, and a large number of diplomatic cables.

Manning was charged under the Uniform Code of Military Justice for transferring classified data onto his personal computer and communicating national defence information to an unauthorized source between November 19 2009 and May 27 2010. Manning spends 23 hours a day in solitary confinement and is not allowed to exercise in his cell. He has been denied a pillow and sheets, is under constant surveillance, and is allowed no contact, even indirectly, with the media. He faces a maximum jail sentence of 52 years.

WikiLeaks has not identified Manning as the source of the material. By January 2011 the total donations for this defence, raised by the Bradley Manning Support Network, had risen to over \$100,000. Julian Assange has declared that if Manning was indeed responsible for the leak, then the soldier was an unparalleled hero, and has also said he regards Manning as a political prisoner.

Wenn ich Lieder komponiere, versuche ich, das vollständigste mögliche Stück in meinem inneren Ohr zu hören, bevor ich mich darauf einlasse, es zu notieren (Lieder sind dafür geeignet zu werden!). Die Notation ist eher ein Akt der Transkription. Formale Strukturen sind nicht in erster Linie wichtig für diesen Prozess, obwohl bestimmte erweiterte Techniken einen integralen Bestandteil dessen bilden, was ich höre, und dementsprechend oft präsent sind.

Im Fall des Lieds „The Ballad of Bradley Manning“ habe ich das Stück von einem Gefühl extremer Gefangenschaft abgeleitet. Ich wurde in meinem Leben zweimal für politische Aktivitäten verhaftet und habe so einen flüchtigen Einblick in diese Situation bekommen, den ich dazu nutzen konnte, an der Musik zugrunde zu legen.

When composing songs, I try to hear the fully formed piece in my inner ear before I commit to notating it. Songs are meant to be sung! The notation is more of an act of transcription. Formal structures are not foremost in this process, though certain extended techniques are an integral part of how I hear, and are often present.

In the case of *The Billard of Bradley Manning*, the song was derived from the feeling of being imprisoned to an extreme degree. I have twice been arrested for political activities and so caught a tiny glimpse of that experience which I used to inform the music.

**Georg
Friedrich Haas**

**Schweigen
II.
Lampedusa**

**Escalier
du Chant**

46



Schweigen II. Lampedusa

so langsam wie in einem Atemzug möglich

The musical score is written for Soprano and Mezzo-soprano voices. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The second system continues the vocal line with a piano accompaniment line. The third system concludes the piece with a final vocal line and piano accompaniment. Dynamic markings include *p*, *pp*, *mf*, and *f*. Performance instructions such as *sempre p* and *a* are present throughout the score.

Abbildung: Auszug aus der Partitur

Image: Excerpt from the score

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Schweigen II. Lampedusa

Es gibt eine Regel, die Seefahrer seit Jahrhunderten beherzigen. Gefährdete Leben auf See müssen gerettet werden. Das Seerechts-Übereinkommen der Vereinten Nationen weicht von dieser Vorgabe nicht ab: „Jede Person“, unabhängig von Nationalität oder Status, muss aus Seenot gerettet und „an einen sicheren Ort“ gebracht werden.

In der Nacht zum 8. August 2007 retteten sieben tunesische Fischer 44 Menschen das Leben, die im offenen Meer zwischen Tunesien und Lampedusa in einem Schlauchboot kurz davor waren zu kentern. Kapitän Abdelkarim Bayoudh und sein Kollege Abdelbasset Zenzari nahmen daraufhin die Flüchtlinge an Bord ihrer zwei Fischerboote und machten sich auf den Weg nach Lampedusa.

Dort, jedoch wurde die Crew festgehalten und wegen Verdachts auf Förderung illegaler Zuwanderung in Untersuchungshaft genommen. Die Fischer hätten die Aufforderung der Behörden ignoriert, den italienischen Hoheitsgewässern fernzubleiben. Sie mussten mit bis zu 15 Jahren Haft rechnen.

2009 wurden am Ende des ersten Jahres Verfahren zwar alle Beteiligten von der vorgelieblichen Straftat der Beihilfe zur illegalen Einreise von Asylsuchenden freigesprochen, die beiden Kapitäne jedoch wegen Widerstands gegen ein Kriegsschiff zu zweieinhalb Jahren Haft verurteilt. Am 21. September 2011 wurden Zenzari und Bayoudh durch das sizilianische Berufungsgericht schließlich freigesprochen. Die Tat der Seerettung sei kein Straftatbestand, sondern eine Pflicht.

Derweil nahmen im Februar 2011 auf Lampedusa zunächst 50 Mitarbeiter der Grenzschutzagentur „Frontex“ die Arbeit auf. Bei den ersten Frontex-Vertretern handelt es sich um „Screeners“ und „Debriefers“. Mitarbeiter aus verschiedenen EU-Mitgliedsstaaten, die die Bootsflüchtlinge auf Lampedusa identifizieren und befragen sollen – unter anderem über die Transportwege.

Flüchtlingsorganisationen werfen Frontex vor, gegen das Seerecht und die Genfer Flüchtlingskonvention zu verstoßen – unter anderem weil Bootsflüchtlinge abgewiesen werden, ohne die Möglichkeit zu erhalten, einen Asylantrag zu stellen.

Sailors have paid heed to one rule for centuries: those at risk at sea must be rescued. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea does not differ from this historical precept: „Every person“, regardless of nationality or status, must be saved from distress at sea and be brought to a safe place.

On the night of 8 August 2007, seven Tunisian fishermen rescued 44 people who were adrift in the open sea between Lampedusa and Tunisia in an inflatable dinghy, on the verge of capsizing. Tunisian Captain Abdelkarim Bayoudh and his colleague Abdelbasset Zenzari took the refugees on board their two fishing boats and made their way to Lampedusa.

When they reached Lampedusa, the fishing crew was detained and remanded in custody on suspicion of aiding illegal immigration. The Tunisian fishermen had ignored the authorities' demand that they stayed away from Italian waters. They faced up to 15 years in prison.

In 2009, at the end of the first round of proceedings all parties were acquitted of the alleged offence of aiding the illegal immigration of asylum seekers, but the two captains were sentenced to two and a half years in prison for putting up resistance to a warship. On 21 September 2011, Zenzari and Bayoudh were finally acquitted by the Sicilian appeals court. The act of sea rescue is, according to the ruling, not an offence, but a duty.

Meanwhile, in February 2011, employees of the border protection agency „Frontex“ took up work in Lampedusa. Initially, around 50 specialists were expected. The first Frontex representatives were „screeners“ and „debriefers“: the staff, who are from different EU Member States, are supposed to identify the boat people on Lampedusa and question them about the transport routes and other issues.

Refugee organizations have repeatedly accused Frontex of violating maritime law and the Geneva Convention, not least because boat people are turned away without receiving the opportunity to apply for asylum.

Quellen / sources: www.spiegel.de/patroana/justiz/0,1618,507456,00.html,110r.de/2011/pressemitteilung-3275805963-longest-falliger-freispruch-der-tunesischen-libeasdirector,www.lageschdau.de/ausland/lampedusa260.html,www.timeofmalta.com/articles/view/20110608/world/body-with-204-migrants-runs-aground-near-lampedusa-364103 (Letzter Zugriff: 12. 10. 2011)

Georg Friedrich Haas

Schweigen

Unfassbares geschieht, ist geschehen.
Über vieles davon spricht man, vieles ist tief
im kollektiven Gedächtnis verankert.
Und über vieles wird nicht gesprochen.
Über Unbequemes, Schmerzliches,
Beunruhigendes.
An manches davon möchte ich in meiner
Musik erinnern.

Silence

Inconceivable things happen, have happened.
We speak about much of it; much is anchored
deeply in our collective memory.
And much is not spoken of at all. The un-
comfortable things. The painful things. The
troubling things.
And some things I want to commemorate
with my music.

word of mouth

FALL/WINTER 2015

by Klea Charitou, Marina Maniadaki, Eleanna Papathanasiadi, Angeliki Roussou, Jorgina Stamogianni

[argentina]

Buenos Aires

CAI GUO-QIANG [1]

Fundación Proa

13 December 2014 – March 2015

Cai Guo-Qiang's work engages with Chinese traditions and narratives, science, gunpowder, animals and fireworks. Cai's installations, colossal sculptures and drawings seem to have been drawn from the most extraordinary allegories. Specifically for his first exhibition in Argentina, the artist conceives a series of new gunpowder drawings and site-specific installations to be accompanied by a retrospective video display of his famous "explosion events" all around the world. One of these will also take place over Vuelta de Rocha at the end of December; if you happen to be around, don't miss it! (www.proa.org) MM



[1]

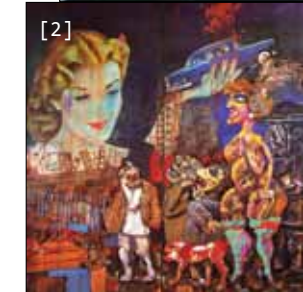
ANTONIO BERNI –

JUANITO Y RAMONA [2]

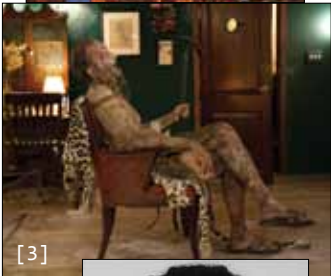
Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires

30 October 2014 – 25 February 2015

Throughout his long career, Antonio Berni created hundreds of works around the fictional characters of Juanito Laguna and Ramona Montiel. Representing the post-war society of Argentina, Juanito made his first appearances at the 1962 Venice Biennale, winning his creator the Grand Prix for Printmaking. The everyday life and surroundings of Juanito and Ramona are explored through paintings, etchings, woodcuts, collages and found objects brought together for this exhibition. A selection of documentary films investigating the creation of the *Juanito and Ramona* series along with songs inspired by Juanito complete this extensive show curated by Mari Carmen Ramírez and Marcelo Pacheco. (www.malba.org.ar) MM



[2]



[3]



[4]



[5]

Norman Mailer's *Ancient Evenings* (1983) is an explicit novel placing the turmoil of American life in the context of Egyptian mythology. In an attempt to redeem his book, which had previously received hazardous criticism, Mailer turned to Matthew Barney. Initiated in 2007, *River of Fundament* brings together film, live performance, drawings and a series of narrative sculptures investigating concealed rituals and allegories inspired by Mailer's novel. Presented at the Haus der Kunst (Munich) last summer, the show now includes a series of Egyptian antiquities from David Walsh's collection, chosen and placed within the exhibition by Barney to accentuate Mailer's framework. The whole is a dynamic exploration of post-industrial folklore and literature. (www.mona.net.au) MM



[6]

Sydney

CHUCK CLOSE – PRINTS, PROCESS

AND COLLABORATION [4]

Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA)

20 November 2014 – 15 March 2015

Internationally acclaimed for his signature large-scale portraiture deriving mostly from photographs, Chuck Close has had more than 200 solo exhibitions. This November, his colossal portraits travel to Sydney as part of the Sydney International Art Series. From traditional Japanese woodcuts to etching and lithography, *Prints, Process and Collaboration* investigates Close's engagement with the endless possibilities of print-making. The artist's decision-making process, from choice of the source photograph to selection of the print-making method, unfolds throughout the exhibition, offering the viewer a deeper understanding of his work.

(www.mca.com.au) MM

[brazil]

São Paulo

PAULO BRUSCKY [5]

Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (MAM)

2 September – 14 December 2014

Paulo Bruscky has been active since the 1970s. During the Brazilian dictatorship, however, his work was censored and he was imprisoned. As a result, most of his conceptual projects remained in his "idea notebooks", as Bruscky calls them. These are the starting point for this exhibition. A selection of works described in the notebooks will be produced for the first time as live performances throughout the show. In *Work Shift*, a museum employee's office is transferred to the exhibition space and his daily work becomes a performance, while in *My Brain Draws Like That*, the artist's emotions become prints with the help of an electroencephalograph device. An original approach to the interaction between public and institution, this show depicts the crucial moments between the conception and production of an artwork. (www.mam.org.br) MM

[costa rica]

San José

A CHRONICLE OF INTERVENTIONS [6]

TEOR/ética

9 October 2014 – 22 January 2015

A Chronicle of Interventions explores key historical interventions that have taken place in Central America in the twentieth century through the work of contemporary artists. It is a collaborative project between Tate Modern and TEOR/ética curated by Shoair Mavlian and Inti Guerrero and produced for Tate Modern's series *Project Space*. Thus, before moving to San José, the exhibition premiered and stayed for two months

in the Tate. Interestingly, Tate's Project Space series gave rise to a show that departs from Group Material's installation *Timeline: A Chronicle of US Intervention in Central and Latin America* to discuss the postcolonial and now global geopolitical condition. Group Material's historical installation, first presented in 1984 in PS1 Contemporary Art Center (New York), is now restaged together with the works of Humberto Vélez, Michael Stevenson, Óscar Figueroa, Andreas Siekmann, Regina José Galindo, José Castrellón and Naufús Ramírez-Figueroa. Some of the recurring themes include the tensions over the Panama Canal, the corporate impact on regional food production and violent political oppression in Guatemala. (www.teoretica.org) AR

[cyprus]

Nicosia

CHRISTODOULOS PANAYIOTOU [7]

Point Centre for Contemporary Art

27 February – 24 April 2015

After numerous solo exhibitions throughout the world for over a decade now, Christodoulos Panayiotou's first solo show in his country of origin, Cyprus, will be hosted at the Point Centre for Contemporary Art. With a focus on social concepts and practices, Panayiotou's work often interweaves elements from the fields of anthropology, history, philosophy and choreography. New pieces produced especially for this exhibition at Point will be shown alongside pre-existing ones. The show aims to re-introduce the work of the internationally acclaimed artist to a local audience and to enable a subtle reading of his artistic practice. A must see! (www.pointcentre.org) EP

[france]

Paris

CAMILLE HENROT – THE PALE FOX [8]

Bétonsalon

20 September – 20 December 2014

Camille Henrot presents her first large-scale solo exhibition, *The Pale Fox*, an immersive environment that builds on her previous project *Grosse Fatigue* (2013), a film awarded the Silver Lion at the 55th Venice Biennale. Objects from museum collections together with eBay purchases are displayed on a series of selves designed by the artist in an attempt to make the exhibition a model for information storage and retrieval. The whole is presented as a place for meditation on our shared desire to understand the world intimately through the objects that surround us. With an approach that draws on anthropology and social archaeology and by applying Leibniz's philosophical principles to her walls, her installation draws on the law of continuity as an inexhaustible, impatient, creative force. (www.betonsalon.net) KC

NIKI DE SAINT PHALLE [9]

Grand Palais

17 September 2014 – 2 February 2015

A major retrospective of the work of French painter and sculptor Niki de Saint Phalle is taking place this autumn at the Grand Palais. Over 200 works and archives, many un-

word of mouth

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published, displayed over 2,000 square meters, chart the artistic career of one of the most renowned artists of the mid twentieth century. Saint Phalle's giant robots, voluptuous *Nanas* figures, famous *Tirs* (Shooting Paintings), mechanical assemblages created with her partner Jean Tinguely, documentation of her audacious performances, architectural projects and monumental sculptures (*Giardino dei Tarocchi* and *The Tree of Life*), make up a thrilling show that demonstrate the joyous side of her work as well as its political and feminist content. (www.grandpalais.fr) KC

INSIDE [10]

Palais de Tokyo

20 October 2014 – 11 January 2015

The winter exhibition cycle of the Palais de Tokyo opens with the group show *Inside*, which aims to lead the visitor on a risky interior voyage, with the exhibition space serving as a metaphor. *Inside* is a physical and mental odyssey through commissioned works that transform the space and bring us closer to our existence. Artists include Numen/For Use, Eva Jospin, Marcius Galan, Ryan Gander, Peter Buggenhout, Bruce Nauman and Andro Wekua. By revealing the artists' inner worlds, the works act as mental projections that push visitor to confront inner thoughts and emotions, from desire and pleasure to fear and worry. (www.palaisdetokyo.com) KC

[greece]

Athens

THORN IN THE FLESH [11]

The George Economou Collection

11 September 2014 – May 2015

The George Economou Collection opens its doors to the public two or three times a year. This time it presents a group exhibition titled *Thorn in the Flesh*. Works by major artists, including Jean-Michel Basquiat, Paul McCarthy, Max Beckmann, Louise Bourgeois, Michelangelo Pistoletto and Donald Judd are on display across the Collection's three-storey gallery space. Aiming to explore "the antagonism between abstraction and figuration and their impact on art from after the Second World War to the present", the show focuses on three sequential areas: *Disruption*, *Figure and Flesh*, and will be on view until May 2015. Not to be missed! (www.thegeorgeeconomoucollection.com) EP

PANDA SEX [12]

State of Concept

29 November 2014 – 17 January 2015

A group show that is "not 'about' this or that" under the intriguing title *Panda Sex* is presented at the non-profit art gallery State of Concept. Under no controlling thematic, *Panda Sex*, curated by Tom Morton, draws its characteristics from the species *Alluropoda melanoleuca* – the giant panda bear – and features works by Andreas Angelidakis, Keith Farquhar, Brian Griffiths, So-



[7]



[8]



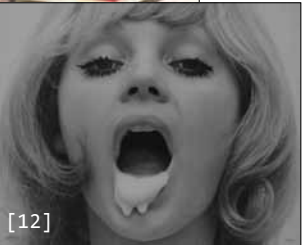
[9]



[10]



[11]



[12]

phie Jung, Natalia LL and Alexander Tovborg, among others. The eleven participating artists were invited to respond to Morton’s “rules of the game” challenge – a series of ‘rules’ dealing with conditions and possibilities of the group exhibition. The result is an orchestration of new and pre-existing pieces, including sculptures, paintings, videos, performances and works employing sound, text and smell. An exhibition about exhibitions; definitely worth a visit. (www.stateofconcept.org) EP

[israel]

Tel Aviv

MICHAËL BORREMANS –

AS SWEET AS IT GETS [13]

Tel Aviv Museum of Art

3 September 2014 – 31 January 2015

This is Michaël Borremans’ first exhibition in Israel, and it comprises about a hundred of his highly evocative paintings, drawings and films from the last fourteen years. One of the most prominent and challenging artists active today, Borremans creates enigmatic, psychologically charged and visually staggering works that present sober-looking characters lacking identity or a clear role. They are portrayed in seemingly mundane environments and situations that are nonetheless mysterious, indecipherable and, consequently, melancholic and unsettling. A hidden force seems to dictate a narrative which is not entirely realised or fully told. Borremans engages in a fascinating dialogue with past masters (such as Velázquez, Goya and Manet) and cinematic iconography (mainly films by David Lynch and Stanley Kubrick), simultaneously infusing his art with a contemporary critical outlook. (www.tamuseum.org.il) JS

[italy]

Milan

CÉLINE CONDORELLI [14]

HangarBicocca

December 2014 – May 2015

Political thinking and architectural form are merged in Celine Condorelli’s multi-faceted practice. Her artistic and curatorial projects span from installations to long-term initiations such as the artist-run Eastside Projects space in Birmingham. HangarBicocca presents parts of this prolific practice alongside new works produced in association with Pir-elli’s research centres. A common thread permeating Condorelli’s production is her emphasis on what she calls “support structures”. Recently, she has been exploring friendship in such a context, acutely pinpointing friendship’s role in cultural production as a condition of working with objects and others. Over the summer of 2014, she participated in *Positions* at Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven) and the *How to Work Together* project at Chisenhale Gallery (London) with works that focused on this idea. Her relevant written pieces have been included in several publications. Whether or not Condorelli sticks to the friendship motif or shifts to another figure of “support” and its potential, we can only expect an insightful solo show in Milan. (www.hangarbicocca.org) AR

Rome

UNEDITED HISTORY: IRAN 1960–2014 [15]

MAXXI

11 December 2014 – 23 March 2015

Catherine David, together with Odile Burluraux, Morad Montazami, Narmine Sadeg and Vali Mahlouji, curates *Unedited History: Iran 1960–2014*, affirming her extensive research in this region. The exhibition was first presented in the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris and is coproduced with MAXXI. While global preoccupation with Middle Eastern art is pretty much a given, the show’s contribution has to do with its particular historical narrative. David argues that it is the first time that Iranian art has been seen from a narrative perspective that includes the 1960s, the period during the Iran–Iraq war in the 1980s and the contemporary situation since the 1990s. The exhibition pinpoints key Iranian artists in order to unravel the potential loops and tensions that have occurred throughout these historical periods. At the same time, it showcases the diverse ways in which the participating artists have used form and media and how their practices have been informed by the respective sociopolitical conditions. (www.fondazionemaxxi.it) AR

Venice

56TH VENICE BIENNALE [16]

Giardini, Arsenal

9 May – 22 November 2015

After appointing an Italian curator (Massimiliano Gioni) to curate the Venice Biennale in 2013, the historic institution seems to be taking a more global approach in its selection of Nigerian curator Okwui Enwezor for the 56th Venice Biennale. It will certainly be one of Enwezor’s biggest career challenges since his groundbreaking directorship of documenta 11 in 2002. Even though comparisons with Swiss curator Harald Szeemann (the only other person in the world to have curated both documenta and

Venice) seem somewhat pointless, expectations are surely high for Enwezor. Drawing on his indisputable success and acceptance by the art world, Venice probably has hopes for his boldness to reflect its own institutional frame. Enwezor has stated that “the institution of la Biennale itself will be a source of inspiration in planning the Exhibition”. Hopefully, it will be another shake-up for la Biennale. (www.labiennale.org) AR

[lebanon]

Beirut

UNDER CONSTRUCTION [17]

Beirut Art Center

10 December 2014 – 31 January 2015

As a part of its initiative to promote innovative talent, Beirut Art Center (BAC) is organising its annual group show for the sixth consecutive year. The theme of the show will be *Under Construction*, in reference to the

young participating artists, but also in reference to Beirut, a city in a continuous process of transformation. The

works deal with the idea of constant construction in various fields: building the landscape, building the self, building the artwork. The word ‘construction’ is to be understood as a process of metamorphosis, whether it is linked to the notion of progress, to destruction or to entropy. The participating artists have been selected by BAC together with a jury. (www.beirutartcenter.org) JS

[mexico]

Mexico City

THEORY OF COLOUR [18]

Museo Universitario Arte

Contemporáneo (MUAC)

27 September 2014 – 7 February 2015

Theory of Colour plays with the idea of the existence of a set of basic rules for combining colours, prompting us to consider aspects of social distribution and exclusion on the basis of skin pigmentation. The show investigates contemporary art produced over the past ten years in which artists from different generations and countries deal with the issue of racism. Without being able to analyse such an inextricable phenomenon as a universal category, through a diversity of approaches – nationalism, scientism, homogenisation, exoticisation, colonisation, exploitation, sexualisation – the exhibition attempts not to map or provide a historical overview but rather to open up a cultural space for debate. (www.muac.unam.mx) KC

[morocco]

Marrakech

MARRAKECH BEFORE PARIS [19]

Marrakech Museum for Photography and Visual Arts

7 November 2014 – 9 November 2014

Marrakech Before Paris is a three-day series of talks and workshops. Panels of established names in the global art world, including Iwona Blazwick (director of the Whitechapel Gallery, London), Mouna Mekouar (associate curator at the Centre Pompidou-Metz) and Frances Terpak (chief curator of photographs at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles), together with local highly positioned institutional figures such as Mehdi Qotbi (president of the Moroccan Museums Foundation) will discuss issues of collecting, managing institutions and cases of Moroccan art. The event incorporates the opening of the *Eve Arnold: A Survey* exhibition at MMP that lasts until 31 December 2014. (www.mmpva.org) AR

[palestine]

East Jerusalem

ART WALK / URBAN INTERVENTION [20]

Various venues

1 March – 31 March 2015

Nine different ‘stations’ throughout the old city will shed light on marginalised and unknown places to allow citizens to discover the city from a different angle. The project involves three Palestinian and three international artists, who will decide between producing an artwork or making an urban intervention. These will be showcased over a period of a month. The audience

will also have the opportunity to experience the artworks in a very different context, indoors in the Al Hoash gallery. (www.alhoashgallery.org) JS

Ramallah

5TH RIWAQ BIENNALE [21]

Various venues

1 June 2014 – 1 June 2016

With its concrete political outlook and its durational, discursive approach, Riwaq has always challenged what a biennial can be. It was initiated in 2005 to expand upon Riwaq’s approach aiming at the revitalisation of historic centers of fifty towns and villages throughout Palestine. This time, the 5th Riwaq Biennale (RB5) will span an entire two years, focusing on bodies in space: who was here before, who’s still around. Although it may not prioritise exhibitionary display, RB5 does nonetheless emphasise materiality, approaching objects as aesthetic touchstones, historical pointers and functional infrastructures alike. It addresses the look of thought, the traction of theory and the promises of sustainability in contemporary art within Palestine and beyond. (www.riwaq.org) JS

[portugal]

Lisbon

AN INFINITE CONVERSATION – ARTISTS’

BOOKS, EPHEMERA AND DOCUMENTS [22]

Museu Coleção Berardo

10 July 2014 – 1 February 2015

The exhibition *An Infinite Conversation* at Museu Coleção Berardo presents a wide selection of artists’ books, posters and other ephemera from the renowned Teixeira de Freitas Collection. Designed as an addendum to Museu Coleção Berardo’s permanent collection, which is dedicated to the period from 1960 to the present day, the exhibition engages the two collections in fruitful dialogue and aims to suggest new ways towards understanding some of the key artists of that period. Including artists’ books and ephemera by Vito Acconci, John Baldessari, John Cage, Daniel Gustav Cramer, Abraham Cruzvillegas, Gabriel Kuri, Mateo Lopez, Robert

Smithson and Lawrence Weiner, among others, the show explores the range of thought and process that surrounds art making and indicates the various forms it can take. Visitors are invited to a magical journey through “a museum without walls”, as the French writer André Malraux once described art books. (www.museuberardo.pt) EP

Porto

MONIR SHAROUDY FARMANFARMAIAN –

INFINITE POSSIBILITY: MIRROR WORKS

AND DRAWINGS 1974–2014 [23]

Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art

9 October 2014 – 11 January 2015

Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art presents a survey exhibition of the Iranian artist Monir Sharoudy Farmanfarmaian. The ambitious show focuses on Monir’s sculptural and graphic oeuvre over a career of more than forty years, showcasing works from the artist’s own collection, many

of which have not been seen publicly since the 1970s. Although the 91-year-old artist lived and worked in New York for many years, traditional techniques from her Iranian heritage and Islamic geometric patterns found in Iranian architecture and decoration are deeply rooted in the body of her work. The exhibition follows the evolution of her signature geometric *aineh-kari* mirror mosaics and often large-scale sculptures. It also reveals previously unseen abstract compositions on paper. Once described as “that beautiful Persian girl” by John Cage, Monir is widely recognised as one of the most influential artists working in Iran today, and *Infinite Possibility* is an excellent opportunity to see her work. (www.serralves.pt) EP

[puerto rico]

San Juan

4TH SAN JUAN POLY/GRAPHIC TRIENNIAL:

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN [24]

Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña

24 October 2015 – 2 February 2016

The fourth edition of the San Juan Poly/Graphic Triennial focuses on the current importance of the image, its recent transformations and its presence in three-dimensional space. The Triennial aims to develop and explore connections throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. The curatorial team comprises curator-in-chief Gerardo Mosquera (Cuba), Alexia Tala (Chile) and Vanessa Hernández-García (Puerto Rico). It involves artist workshops and an international colloquium on the subject of the contemporary image. (www.icp.gobierno.pr) AR

[republic of malta]

Valletta

PARALLEL BORDERS 2: LANDFALL [25]

Malta Contemporary Art

January 2015 – January 2018

The second edition of the ambitious Maltese project *Parallel Borders* takes the Middle East as its regional focus in a context of global geopolitics. The project comprises six platforms and adopts a site-specific methodology to explore territoriality and borders. The various platforms emerge out of cross-disciplinary collaborations of artists including Akram Zaatari and Lamia Joreige. The project is curated by the founder of MCA, Mark Mangion, who developed the prolific two-year project *Parallel Borders 1: Monuments and Shrines to Capitalism*. (www.maltacontemporaryart.com) AR

[south africa]

Cape Town

GERDA SCHEEPERS – PSYCHO SOCIO SURFACE SHOW

[26]

Blank Projects

30 October – 29 November 2014

Moving between sculpture and the picture, in this exhibition Scheepers explores combinations of surfaces and structures, as well as the relationships between them. Alluding to psychological interactions between people, these ele-

ments are applied as formal artistic devices in her current body of work. The sculptures and paintings operate as devices for containment that ultimately, and crucially, fail to contain. Scheepers often works within series or groupings of work, creating environments for often repetitive motifs and gestures. The work is caught up in a system signifying progress, reconfigured in a careful orchestration that deliberately fails to deliver the complete and self-contained result that they seem to promise. (www.blankprojects.com) JS

Limpopo

SONIC MMABOLELA 2 [27]

Various venues

17 November – 30 November 2014

Sonic Mmabolela is a two-week workshop/residency for professional sound artists and composers taking place at Mmabolela Reserve, in the Limpopo province of South Africa, right at the border with Botswana. The workshop involves field and studio work as well as theoretical discussions orientated around current themes pertaining to audio recording. Sonic Mmabolela has a special focus on creative approaches to field recordings and the development of sonic creation projects stemming from the field recordings gathered *in situ* by the participants. Conceived and directed by Francisco López with coordination and logistics by James Webb, the project is now in its second year. (www.franciscolopez.net) JS

[spain]

Barcelona

SIGALIT LANDAU [28]

MACBA

21 November 2014 – 15 February 2015

Jerusalem-born artist Sigalit Landau presents a solo show that focuses on her video practice. The title of the show is inspired by the symbolic position that sand occupies in the artist’s videos. Echoing her multi-cultural and nomadic past, Landau contemplates issues of borders and fluid identities. Sand, the beach and the commercial economy of the Phoenicians are all thematic tools through which history and borders are filtered into her work. However, as well as symbolism, Landau employs the strategy of realism. The fact that real bodies act like sculpture in her videos makes the work descriptive as opposed to narrative and adds another layer to the inside/outside dichotomy that Landau negotiates. (www.macba.cat) AR

Madrid

REALLY USEFUL KNOWLEDGE [29]

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

29 October 2014 – 9 February 2015

For *Really Useful Knowledge*, the curatorial collective WHW (What, How and for Whom) tackles the widely debated issue of critical pedagogy. The group has established the politi-

[usa]

Austin

DO HO SUH [32]

The Contemporary Austin: Jones Center and Laguna Gloria

20 September 2014 – 11 January 2015

Do Ho Suh is renowned for his distinctive way of depicting the boundary between public and private space. His transparent architectural installations explore and realise the traces of past homes and states of mind. His show at The Contemporary Austin brings together old and new works, along with a series of documentary films on the art-making process behind them. A fragile and intimate recreation of household objects, as well as of the artist’s former studio in New York, the exhibition invites the viewer to reconsider what home means, what defines it and what limits it. A poetic approach of our relationship to ephemeral surroundings, this will certainly be a unique experience. (www.thecontemporaryaustin.org) MM

New Orleans

PROSPECT.3: NOTES FOR NOW [33]

Various venues

25 October 2014 – 25 January 2015

Given the distinctive and diverse identity of New Orleans, the city can act as a platform of philosophical inquiry. The curatorial concept of *Prospect.3: Notes for Now* draws on several aspects of Walker Percy’s novel *The Moviegoer* (1961), in which the main character, a resident of New Orleans, gets lost in “the search”. Gradually moving away from his isolation, he joins the collective festive spirit of the city during Mardi Gras. The third installment of this international biennial will showcase more than fifty artists in an exploration of “the search”, aiming to realise the concealed necessity of the other as part of this pursuit. From Jean-Michel Basquiat to Paul Gauguin and Camille Henrot, *Notes for Now* sounds as good as it gets. (www.prospectneworleans.org) MM

New York

ALEXANDRA BACHZETSIIS –

FROM A TO B VIA C [34]

Swiss Institute / Contemporary Art

January 2015

In *From A to B via C* the performer constantly appropriates movements from documented performances, attempting to gradually dispose of any evidence connected to the transition between the original and the ‘borrowed’ motif. The viewer will witness a variety of fleeting identities taking over the performer’s body through the endless re-adaptation of pre-existing material. A vivid exploration of authenticity and reproduction, interpretation and appropriation, Alexandra Bachzetsis’s performance challenges the understanding of our own identity and role in society. In the end, we confront the inevitable question: which parts of us are really ours? (www.swissinstitute.net) MM

cal character of its undertakings within the field of curating – not least since their notable work for the Istanbul Biennial in 2009. The phrase “really useful knowledge” was used by early-19th-century UK workers’ organisations to describe knowledge of economics, politics and philosophy as opposed to task-performing skills perceived by business owners as “useful knowledge”. The show aims to reflect on the contemporary relation between education and various forms of resistance to capitalism. The action of recent social movements actively informs this exploration. The exhibition also considers the role of the organisation in such a context, including the museum as a pedagogical site. (www.museoreinasofia.es) AR

[united arab emirates]

Sharjah

SHARIAH BIENNIAL 12:THE PAST,

THE PRESENT,THE POSSIBLE [30]

Sharjah Art Foundation

5 March – 5 June 2015

Beginning with Sharjah Art Foundation’s annual March Meeting in 2014, SB12 has engaged artists in a conversation about the place, the project and each other’s practices. Though archaeological research confirms the presence of humans in this region over 125,000 years ago, Sharjah – as a city, an emirate and a member of a relatively young federation – is still in the process of imagining itself through education, culture, religion, heritage and science. SB12 invites over fifty artists and cultural practitioners to participate in this process by introducing their ideas of ‘the possible’ through their art and work. Two thirds of participating artists will present new works and commissions. Programming for SB12 includes monthly lectures and workshops in various locations around Sharjah from September 2014 to February 2015. (www.sharjahart.org) JS

[uruguay]

Montevideo

2ND MONTEVIDEO BIENNIAL:

500 YEARS OF FUTURE [31]

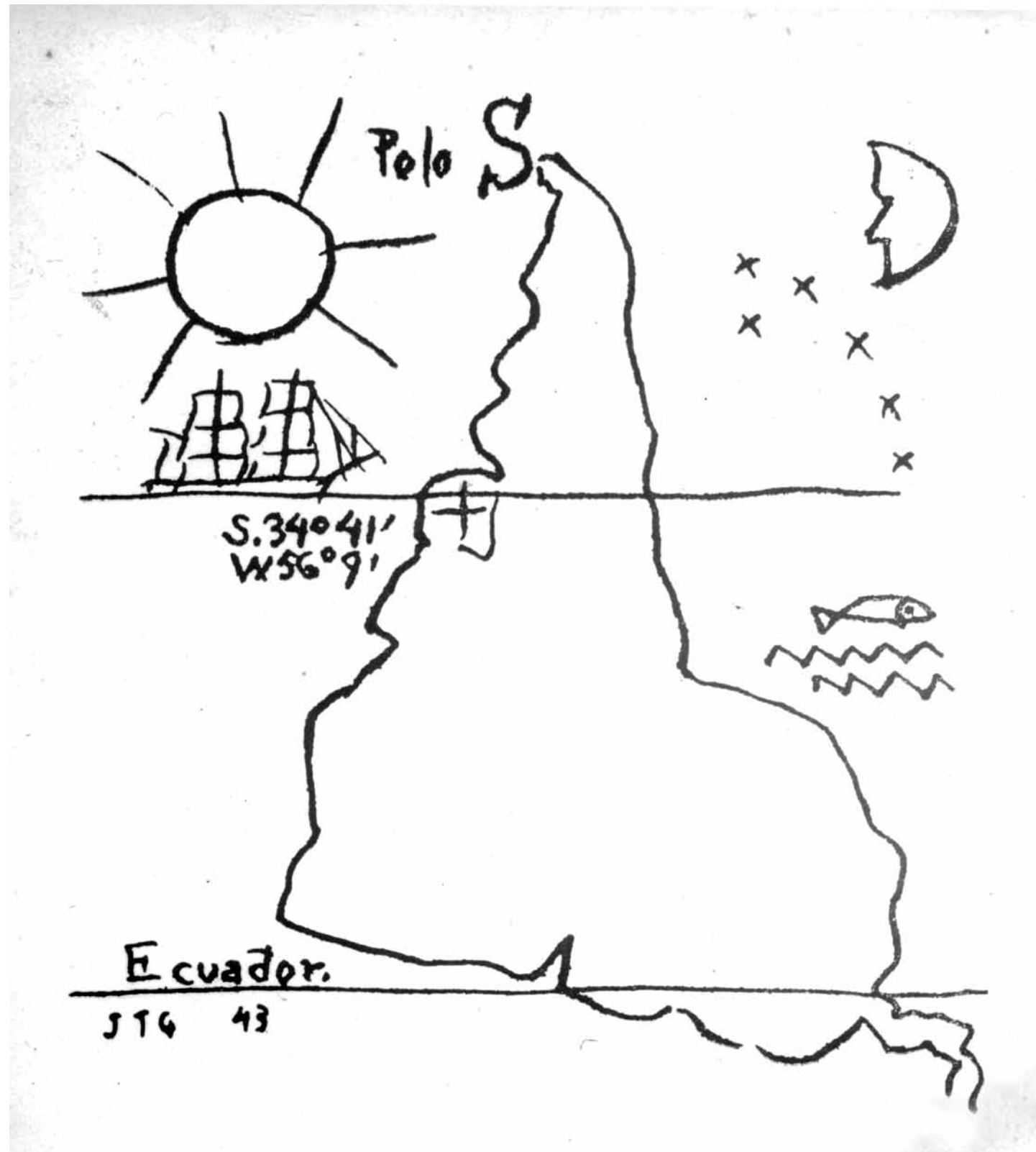
Various venues

25 September – 22 November 2014

The 2nd Montevideo Biennial focuses this year on the relativity of time and the highly subjective, non-linear way that distance is experienced in art. Under the title *500 Years of Future*, the exhibition suggests that at every moment of history the present has always also been a projection into the future. ‘The future’ as a great narrative of art will be examined through the different approaches of artists such as Franz Ackermann, Chen Xiaoyun, Juliana Stein, Adrian Paci, Gian Paolo Minelli, Ricardo Lanzarini, Simon Gush and Gianfranco Foschino. The artists sometimes reduce and sometimes enlarge the temporal and spatial distances between the continents, and sometimes even make them converge. (www.bienaldemontevideo.com) KC

p.s.

GUEST: PABLO LEÓN DE LA BARRA



Joaquín Torres García
América invertida (Inverted America), 1943

Selected by Pablo León de la Barra especially for *South as a State of Mind* magazine

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